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History of the Pennsylvania
Mennonite Church in Kansas

History of the Pennsylvania Mennonite Church in Kansas

written by
Emma King Risser

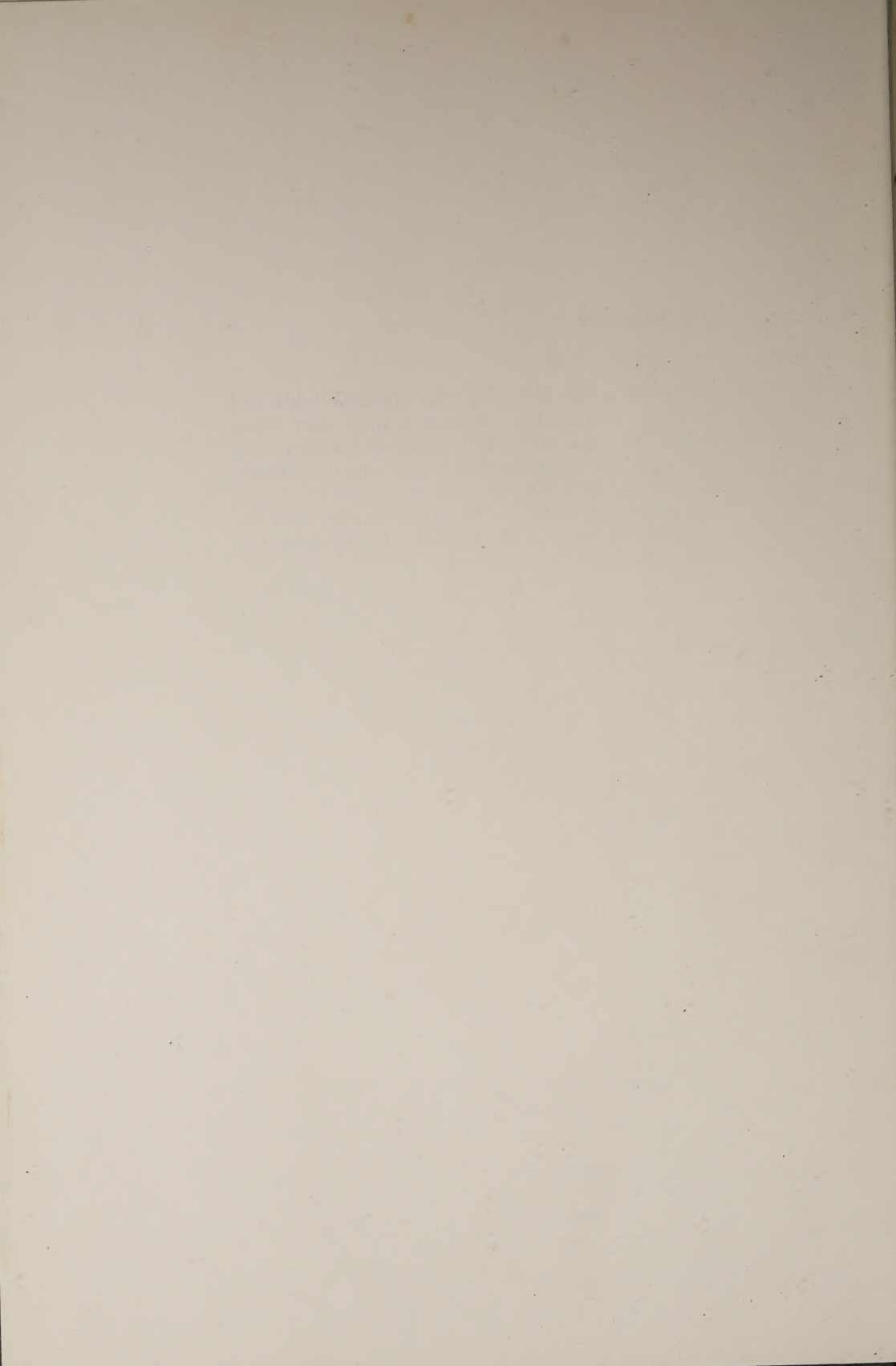
PENNSYLVANIA MENNONITE CHURCH
HESSTON, KANSAS
1958

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Dedication

To the early pioneers, who through faith and courage, settled these Kansas plains; who established for their offspring a place of worship; who preached and lived the Word, and taught faithfully its message of salvation; who set before us worthy precedents of industry, thrift, economy; who bequeathed to us a noble heritage, is this little volume affectionately dedicated.

E. K. R.



Foreword

It was important that the history of the Pennsylvania Church, near Hesston, Kansas, should be written.

Those who have been a part of this history, and who are still living, will find here a satisfying account of developments in which they are emotionally involved. The place of one's spiritual nurture always seems like a sacred spot.

The young people now working in this congregation will gain perspective and instruction from this story.

But for Mennonite history in general this account is significant. This church rose on the pioneer prairies. And in many ways one finds here the pioneer spirit. This group did not lag behind; it forged ahead. It was early or first in evangelistic meetings, in the organization of a Sunday school, in special group singing, in the development of mission spirit, in teacher's and prayer meeting, in Sunday school conferences, in what we know today as Christian Life conferences, in the sewing circle, in the Sunday-school library, in its use of laymen and of women in public services. It has furnished more than the usual quota of missionaries and other workers in the church-wide program.

Of special importance for the Mennonite Church is the early emphasis here on the spiritual life. This is closely related to the aggressiveness of the congregation in other matters. If fanaticism and a divisive spirit seems to have been an outcome, one can only feel that this was a risk which had to be taken. Certainly it was not a necessary result of the deeper Christian experience.

The Pennsylvania congregation made a happy choice when it asked Emma King Risser to write this history. No living person knows the story better than she. It has been for her a labor of love, and if at places her feelings and judgments are apparent, it is only because these matters have been of such vital concern to her. The other sons and daughters of the Pennsylvania Church owe her a debt of gratitude for a task well done.

Paul Erb.



Introduction

Writing the history of the Pennsylvania Church has taken time and energy and thought. The desire for accuracy, coupled with the endeavor to interest and benefit the reader, has made it an exacting task, yet I have found much pleasure and interest in the work.

I am greatly indebted to many sources, and even though the information was oftentimes meager, yet all added together has made our history.

The older residents and pioneers contacted personally were D. D. Zook, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Heatwole, Mrs. Susie (Heatwole) Yoder, Mrs. Emma (Martin) Hostetler, and Mrs. Susie (Erb) Swim. Those contacted by correspondence, Mrs. Fannie Burkhart, R. M. Weaver, and Mrs. Dora (Hess) Roupp.

The unpublished history of the Spring Valley Church by Charles Diener and a manuscript, "The Rise of the Pennsylvania Congregation" by John David Zehr, former student of Hesston College, supplied some facts. The local Methodist Church history supported others. The Kansas-Nebraska Conference Record and the local Sunday School and Quarterly Sunday School Conference records gave still more information. Added to this, the greatest and most appreciated contribution of all were the T. M. Erb Diaries. To his family is given most sincere thanks for the loan of these valuable documents. All references to "the diary" and all quotations from Brother Erb are taken from these.

Grateful acknowledgment is given to all who have helped by word or letter or encouragement.

But history, for the sake of history alone, might not be so profitable or interesting. I have therefore written rather in the style as described by the editor of the Mennonite Sunday-school lesson quarterly when, in commenting on a lesson in II Kings 15:8—17: 41, for May 25, 1947, he says: "The writer of Kings not only wrote history, but evaluated it in the light of abiding principles. His history thus became an effective teaching instrument, and it was for this purpose that it was written. Since this was his purpose and he was not interested in glorifying his nation, he could include both the negative and positive aspects of that history. Their failures as well as their successes were useful as teaching material. And even though the nation's sin overbalanced its righteousness and ended in national disaster, he still was faithful in recording it as a lesson from Jehovah. Historians recognize the impossibility of writing a purely objective history. History must be interpreted if it is to be written. The

only abiding principles are religious principles. Therefore, a true history must ultimately be religious history. It must be interpreted and evaluated as the writer of *Kings* interpreted and evaluated it. All history will ultimately be evaluated in the light of God." In this manner I have written.

With much prayer for guidance, for blessing to the reader, and for the glory of God has this little history been compiled and sent on its way.

Emma King Risser.

Hesston, Kansas
December 28, 1957



Mrs. Emma (King) Risser, January, 1958.

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1. *Beginning Days*

History! What meaning is attached to the word! While it is "a narrative of facts and events arranged chronologically with their causes and effects" and has to do with time in the past or present, yet how much of the future in eternity depends upon these facts and events called history! Just as raindrops falling upon the continental divide find their way to opposite shores, so do these events of history decide eternal destinies. No doubt the founders of the Pennsylvania Church in seeking a home in the West were motivated by the same desires as other pioneers, but back of it all was a divine providence forming a church that would give opportunity for acceptance or rejection of the truth and consequently from which, like the Great Divide, would emerge two streams with destinies as divergent as the two eternities. While the "causes" of migration to this community may be obscure, yet the "effects" have been so apparent that none could question a guiding hand.

Observing the present development of the community, with its moderately prosperous and populated countryside, one can scarcely visualize the early days—no trees, no roads, no Hesston, no Trousdale (later called Zimmerdale), no homes within an eleven-mile radius northwest of Newton except the present Ira Zook home three-fourths mile east of the Pennsylvania Church and a sod house—just prairie grass as far as the eye could see.

No doubt the small Mennonite settlements made a few years earlier in nearby communities—Peabody, Canton, McPherson—led to the first Old Mennonites settling in Harvey County. One of the first of these was the Joseph Shirk family of Elkhart, Indiana, who located here in 1875. Finding no church of their own, they united with the Methodist church which then met in the Sandcreek schoolhouse. Samuel Fergusons of Iowa came in the year of 1877.

Another family was that of Mike Kilmer, who after leaving their Indiana home and spending a year in Marion County, Kansas, moved into the community at even an earlier period, 1872, and located one-half mile north of the Holdeman schoolhouse. The same year Reuben Joseph Heatwole, (February 7, 1847-May 31, 1921) a young man from Harrisonburg, Virginia, came west, met and wooed their daughter, Margaret. They were married February 28, 1873, by Henry Yother of Blue Springs, Nebraska, the nearest Mennonite minister, who drove a wagon a hundred and fifty miles to marry them.

After living some years near Marion Center, Marion County, Kansas, where both had homesteaded (Margaret and her two brothers, Daniel and Christian, having preceded their parents to Kansas a year), they moved between 1878 and 1880 four miles north of the present site of the Pennsylvania Church to the place still known to older residents as the

R. J. Heatwole home. (By 1899 his final residence was established in McPherson County, Kansas.) Thus these families—Kilmer, Ferguson and Heatwole—were the first Mennonites to settle in what was to become the community of the Pennsylvania Church.

The large part R. J. Heatwole should have in the development of the work awaits unfolding in the pages following. Of his mother it is said: "For this child (her tenth) she had prayed that he might be a boy and do much good in the world." The work he helped found and establish bears witness to the answer of that prayer. That he knew the voice of the Lord is evidenced by the following incident as related by his nephew, the late George R. Brunk. After a lapse in his Christian experience, Brunk says: "There came an overwhelming sense of being forsaken by the Spirit of God. I labored hard and long in self-abasement, and prayer to be restored, but the heavens were brass and the earth was iron and Satan plagued me with the Scripture, 'It is impossible . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.' My Uncle R. J. Heatwole had much to do with keeping me from drifting before conversion, so now through all this struggle, I was ashamed to let him know. He lived thirty miles away and we seldom saw each other, but he got the news by way of the throne. One night in a dream he saw me standing and Satan wrapping me from the feet upwards with cords of heavy rope. In spite of all I could do, he fastened both my hands. Then my uncle in his dream saw me turn my eyes to him for help, and when he sprang to help me he awakened. But early the next morning he hitched up his work team and drove, taking all day for the thirty-mile trip. We went out alone and he told me the dream with the response [Brunk's]: 'Uncle Reuben, you have told me how I am better than I could tell you.' Through his help and guidance, I was saved from absolute despair and finally, brightly saved."

Another interesting account depicting the character of this early leader tells us that since there were no roads and the Mennonites were scattered, Brother Heatwole plowed with oxen (some sources say horses), through the tall bluestem grass, a twenty-three mile furrow from the present site of Marion, Kansas, to a mile north and a mile east of the Spring Valley Church near Canton Kansas. This road, covered with the only sunflowers around, as a golden trail, guided the Mennonites, not only to their places of worship, but also provided a road for other early settlers, and over it numerous caravans traveled to and from western harvest fields.

This "furrow" has given no little confusion and difficulty to a number of historians. To establish the accuracy of various details has been impossible. One source says that Chris Kilmer plowed the furrow, another that Daniel Brundage did and still others say that R. J. Heatwole did. As the writer remembers hearing the story, and this supported by Oliver King's article in the *Gospel Herald* of November 11, 1920, and a letter from Mrs. John Hamilton, Sheridan, Oregon, dictated by her stepfather, Chris Kilmer, the logical conclusion seems to be that Heatwole

plowed the furrow. To know that some of the others assisted by driving stakes, etc., may help clear up the difficulty. The contradiction concerning its length—fourteen or twenty-three miles—may also be cleared up with the explanation that it was lengthened after the first fourteen miles were plowed.

These incidents give not only a picture of early pioneering but also represent the character of the man who was later to pave the way for the various activities of this and other churches. What the years on the frontier meant to these lone workers can scarcely be imagined, and with joy they welcomed new recruits.

The David Weaver family of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, was the next to come and reached Newton April 8, 1880. This family of six sons and three daughters was later to fill a large place in the work of the Pennsylvania Church. Martin M. Zimmerman of Lancaster County also came at this time, and soon after came the Hess families—Daniel, Amos, and Abram. In 1883 Solomon Martins and Jacob Z. Burkharth joined the ranks. The early spring of 1885 marked the arrival of Jacob B. Erbs with one son and three daughters, another family destined to make history in the new community. With the Erbs came the Francis W. Horst family to try pioneering on Kansas plains. This family was also to give to the church teachers and preachers and a deacon. In 1888, Michael Horsts and David Reiffs, of Maryland, came to Newton, and Noah Eby, a single man, also joined the number. The names of Jacob A. White, 1886, George Royer, 1886, Henry Horst, 1887, Jacob W. Burkhart, 1887, Amos Graybill, 1888, David M. Schertz, John Shelly, John Evers, Charles Rodgers, 1888, or '89, J. P. Brennemman, Ohio, 1892, Daniel Stauffer, Emanuel Shoup, Samuel Nettrouer, and others belong to this period.

Another group coming from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, also settled here, and from the years of 1885 to 1889 appear the names of David J. Zook, Chris Lantz, and Eli and Chris Byler. These were from the Amish Mennonite Church, and Brother Zook was already their ordained minister and bishop. In these groups combined was formed the nucleus for the Pennsylvania Church, so named because most of its founders came from that state.

The visiting back and forth of these ministers and laymen with the small isolated Illinois-born pioneers worshipping at the little Eureka schoolhouse in Pawnee County, Kansas, created in these people a desire to unite with the larger group. Consequently in the years 1894, 1895, and 1896 the families of E. J. King, C. W. Neuhauser, and S. B. King moved to Harvey County and cast their lot with the Pennsylvania congregation.

The exact year for the organization of this church is uncertain. For some time services were held in the schoolhouse, District 79, one-half mile south of the present church site, and these seem to have begun in 1883. With the ordination of a minister and deacon in the fall of 1885, the organization would most likely date from that time. The diary reference, June 6, 1886, "To church at Pa," before the church was built, would indicate that this name had been chosen while services were yet

at the schoolhouse. (All references to "the diary" as well as most of the quotations, are from the T. M. Erb diaries.)

At Brother David Weaver's invitation and by mutual consent the Amish Mennonite group also met at this schoolhouse on alternate Sundays but both attended each other's services. It is not known just when these groups merged, but the last record of "Amish" communion service is March, 1892, and they likely united soon after. There was little difference but in name. One Sunday the Mennonites had service, the next Sunday the Amish. Ministers from each group preached for the other and on one occasion the Amish bishop asked J. S. Coffman, a Mennonite, to preach the communion service. These groups associated so freely with each other that, as one put it, "They didn't know which meeting belonged to who."

This schoolhouse marked the beginning of a prosperous church. Here were held for this congregation the first preaching service, the first communion service, the first Sunday school, the first singing school, and the first evangelistic meeting.

But the time came when the group decided to build a church, and a site one-half mile south of this schoolhouse was chosen. However, the proposal of a new Missouri Pacific railroad to pass through that area interfered with plans. The large and numerous trains would be too noisy for a church nearby! And so the site was changed to one-half mile north of the schoolhouse. Those who know "Old Jerkey," the one and only train on the road for years, and which seldom ran on Sunday, smile at the thought of her ever disturbing a church service.

Concerning the purchase of this plot of ground, the first entry in the church record of September, 1885, says: "We the undersigned here agree to pay the amount placed by our respective name for the purpose of purchasing three (3) acres of land to be used as a church and burying ground and known as the property of the old Mennonite denomination."

Names:

Martin Zimmerman	\$10.00	Daniel Hess	4.00
Solomon Martin	10.00	David Weaver	25.00
Amos Hess	5.00	Amos Graybill	3.00
Abraham Hess	5.00	Christian Metzler	2.00
John Weaver	5.00	John R. Hess	5.00
R. J. Heatwole	7.00	Jacob Z. Burkhardt	2.00
Jacob B. Erb	8.00	Samuel Ferguson	5.00
Francis W. Horst	4.00		

			\$100.00

Courthouse records show that these "three acres of Section 25, Township 22, range 1 West were deeded by Solomon Martin for consideration of one hundred (\$100.00) dollars in 1886."

The next recorded item of a year later: "We the undersigned herewith agree to pay the amount placed by our respective names for the purpose of building a church house as property of the Pennsylvania Church

of the old Mennonite denomination" gives the next step toward the new building. Following this is a list of ten names of the local church, a number of businessmen and firms in Newton—Mr. A. D. McLain, Mr. W. Trousdale, Axtell and Brewer, German National Bank and Lehman Hardware—and contributions from churches and individuals in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Ohio. A total of one thousand seventy-five dollars and thirty-eight cents (\$1075.38) was subscribed and work was begun in the fall of 1886 and finished early in 1887.

This first building was a simple and humble frame structure approximately thirty-two by forty-four feet. The ceiling was low and the walls were covered with ceiling boards. There were homemade benches, two stoves; to the east was a long pulpit back of which was a longer bench. There were two "amen corners." Two anterooms with a vestibule between were in the front to the west. The water bucket sat just inside of the door to the right in the main room. There was no basement nor separate classrooms, and, while there was little of beauty or comfort, yet God was there to bless and crown the efforts of that little group. On August 13, 1887, T. M. Erb painted on the front the name—Pennsylvania Mennonite Church—a name which has represented a sacred sanctuary to many.

The immaculate cleaning of that building twice a year has never been improved upon even with all the new cleaning devices and products. Under the careful supervision of Mother Erb, Mother Horst, and Mother Zimmerman, no dirt remained. When communion was announced for the next Sunday, it naturally followed that Grandpa Erb would rise to say in his German-English way, "We will clean the church till next Thursday." Why this cleaning always preceded the communion service may not be known, but could it be that setting the spiritual house in order for the Lord's Supper, also suggested setting the natural house in order, as well as preparing a clean floor for feet-washing service? That early custom had been followed with but few exceptions until recent years when with modern improvements, such cleaning became less necessary.

2. The New (or Second) Church Building

Not many years passed until the need for a larger building became apparent. After deciding on July 14, 1902, to build, the building committee composed of T. M. Erb, M. M. Zimmerman, and A. L. Hess met July 18 to formulate plans. With fourteen hundred (\$1400.00) dollars subscribed the work began. On July 31 a temporary structure was erected just north of the church with lumber donated by D. M. Schertz. Services were held there during the construction of the church from August 10 until near the time of dedication. Of this tabernacle Brother Erb says: "It will do very well," and so it did, for many times of blessing were experienced there.

This second and present building was such an improvement over the old one that some have not yet forgotten the thrill experienced when first they viewed it. This frame building forty by sixty feet comfortably seats two hundred and fifty people. The high rounded ceiling, the factory-made benches, the elevated rostrum and small pulpit set in a small alcove were a pleasing and welcome change. The old ceiling boards were used for wainscoting, and the walls above were papered. The full basement, finished in September, 1909, provided room for primary Sunday school, coal, furnace, and storage.



The Pennsylvania Church after 1909.

This building was dedicated January 18, 1903, with prayer and great rejoicing. To a well-filled house of about five hundred Brother George R. Brunk preached the dedicatory sermon, using as a text Genesis 28:17: "this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Others also assisted in this morning service. Sunday school convened in the afternoon. Brother Brackbill, a Brethren in Christ minister from Abilene, Dickinson Co., Kansas, preached in the evening service while children from the orphanage, Hillsboro, gave special numbers in song. This long-anticipated dedication day brought joy and blessing.

Kerosene lamps were first used to light the building, but these were replaced January 2, 1909, by a gas lighting system until March 1, 1925, when electric lights were installed.

For various reasons the anterooms were built to the rear (east end) of the church. There were three of these, with the basement stairs going down from the middle one. The front entrance opening directly into the assembly room was not satisfactory, neither were entrances at both ends. Mingling with one another was difficult, and the bulletin board and library in the back of the church and cabinet for Sunday school supplies in the front were less accessible to all.

Hence a growing need was felt for some years for a rearrangement of some sort, along with other improvements. The first step was the sanding and refinishing of the floor and benches in the summer of 1947. The benches placed in a slightly angling position give a better view of the speaker and a closer-together feeling of the audience.



Pennsylvania Church, December, 1957.

Later it was decided to build a fourteen by twenty-eight annex to the front of the church. The plan called for two anterooms with a small hall and stairways to main floor and basement. An interested friend of the church—Mrs. Lena Rodgers—offered to pay for the material used. Her offer was accepted and work began in October, 1947. This new entrance with its easy steps was used for the first time at the funeral of Mrs. Ezra King on November 26. A thing of historic interest about these steps is the fact that the treads were made from the old hard pine benches of the first church. For the few remaining who sat on those benches, who learned and taught, who sang and prayed, who wept and rejoiced—they bring sacred memories. The cost of this addition totaled two thousand six hundred and seventy-four dollars (\$2674.00)—more than the original cost of the church itself. A new automatic oil burning furnace was also installed at this time, this costing around fifteen hundred (\$1500.00) dollars as compared with less than two hundred, the cost of the one it replaced.

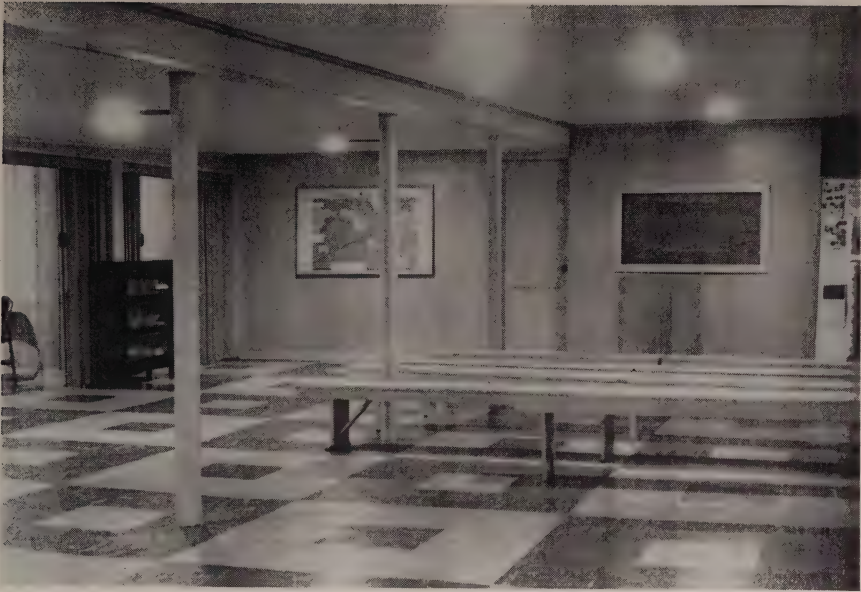
Beginning in January of 1954 the interior of the church was remodeled and redecorated at a cost of \$3,834.06 and dedicated on March 21.

In the summer of 1956 the basement was also remodeled with new foundation, floor, ceiling, windows, and decoration, costing \$6,250.00.

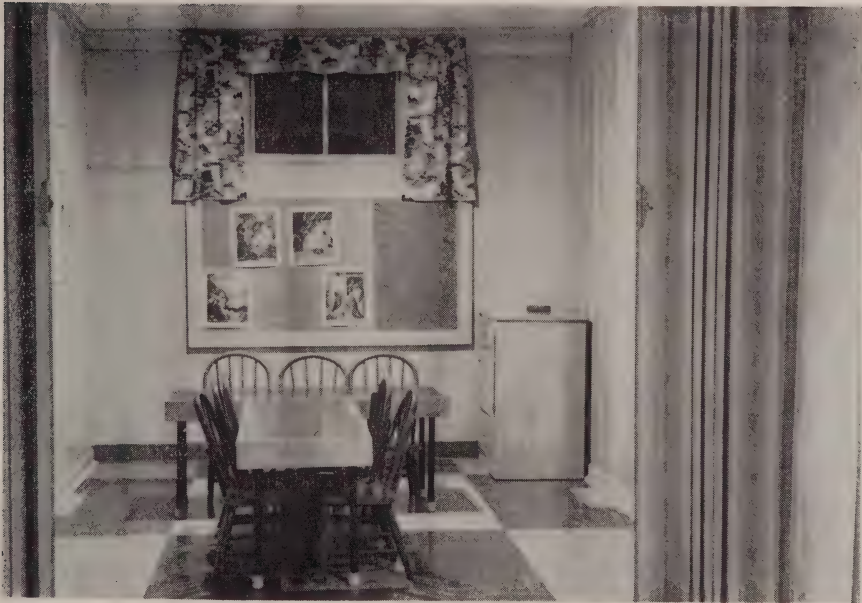
A long row of buggy sheds, built March, 1906, for many years lined the north side of the churchyard. Used later for automobiles, they were finally torn down, as were also the hitching posts. Large elm trees grow in the yard and more were planted in 1945. Shrubs were also planted around the building that year.



Pennsylvania Church, March, 1954.



Pennsylvania Church basement, December, 1957.



A Primary Department classroom in the basement, 1957.

(See early documents in the back of the book.)

3. *The Cemetery*

The cemetery is located immediately back of the church. An interesting account of this cemetery as given in the *Herald of Truth* November, 1881, and quoted in the *Gospel Herald* of November 6, 1956, is as follows:

The people in the neighborhood (northwest of Newton, Kans.) have decided to lay out on the corner of this farm a public burying-ground, prospective also of a Mennonite meetinghouse in the near future, as the brethren from Pennsylvania are settling in this vicinity.

For many years the only one in the immediate vicinity, it was used by many classes—a community burying ground. The fact that so many have buried their loved ones here has been a favorable commentary on the unselfish standards of the Pennsylvania Church. All groups have been free to use the church for their funeral services. Of one such service the diary says: "The Methodist minister of Walton preached a very good sermon on 'Prepare to meet thy God.'" Mennonite ministers were often asked to officiate or to assist on these occasions; many times has the Word gone out in convicting and comforting power from the Pennsylvania pulpit. Many of these thus favored have shown appreciation by contributing to the upkeep of the cemetery.

The first death in the new colony was that of Mrs. Solomon Martin, mother of Mrs. Emma Hostetler, on October 14, 1885. She was buried in the location first selected for the church house, but change of that location necessitated another cemetery and several months later her body was removed to the present site, the first to be buried in the Pennsylvania cemetery. Up to the present time three hundred and eighty-one are buried there. The first one had visions of heaven as she left this world. Young people are buried there, one young woman confessing that she "came to Christ at the eleventh hour." Young mothers who left with bright hopes of heaven are there and infants safe in glory. Many older people, too, after long and useful lives—"remembered by what (they) have done"—await their reward. "Grandma Erb," ninety-seven, the oldest and last charter member, has found her last resting place there at the side of her husband, Deacon Jacob B. Erb.

The cemetery is maintained by the local church, by regular contributions from the Hesston and East Emmett Churches (who bury there) and by individual and family gifts. M. M. Zimmerman, the first sexton, served until 1926 when he was succeeded by John Roupp. On January 2, 1950, Lloyd Rodgers was chosen to assist him. (See Lease in the back of the book.)



"Grandma" Erb—Wife of Deacon J. B. Erb, and mother of T. M. Erb

4. *Ministers and Ordinations*

These new people in a new land and in a new environment naturally felt the need of church leadership and ministerial help. With no ministers in the group itself they needed to look elsewhere. The first of these leaders was Bishop Daniel Brundage. A native of Ontario, Canada, and later of India and Missouri, and one interested in the early developments of the congregations in the West, he had moved to Canton, Kansas, in 1872. It has been said that these early churches in Kansas owe much to the life and labors of this man of God. "Each Sunday morning he would hitch up his grey pony to a two-wheeled dump cart without springs and drive to one of the four appointments—Catlin, Spring Valley, West Liberty, or Pennsylvania. He made every possible effort to fill appointments regardless of weather. He was an earnest speaker, and preached an experimental religion, emphasizing his faith by his walk and conversation." He usually preached in German. He faithfully served the Kansas churches from 1872 (some records say 1875) to 1889. Conference records speak of him as "our aged Bro. Brundage" and he is affectionately remembered by a few today as "Father Brundage."

Contemporary with Brundage was Jacob Holderman, who preached in English. He also lived at Canton, Kansas, and assisted in filling appointments from 1873 to 1889, when he moved to Harper, Kansas.

Another name mentioned in the early history is that of Daniel Wismer, a native of Ontario, Canada, who also lived near Canton a few years and then returned to Canada. He is listed with those who occasionally preached at Pennsylvania Church and from among three others—David Weaver, Matthias Coopriden, and Benjamin Hamilton—was chosen and ordained bishop at the Pennsylvania Church April 9, 1887. He returned to Canada after a few years.

On December 18, 1887, votes were again taken at Pennsylvania Church for a bishop and Matthias Coopriden, Jacob Holderman, Ephraim Shellenberger, Samuel C. Miller, and Benjamin Hamilton were named, with the last one being chosen. Ordained by Brother Brundage, he served Pennsylvania and other nearby churches for some years. Later S. C. Miller of Windom, Kansas, became bishop and served until T. M. Erb was called to that office on October 23, 1898.

Ephraim Shellenberger, an already ordained minister, lived in the community a short time and frequently filled the pulpit; but on February 12, 1888, "preached his farewell sermon and moved to Ransom, Ness County, Kansas."

The first ordination of a minister or deacon from within the group itself was at the schoolhouse on September 26, 1885, when David Weaver was ordained as minister and Jacob B. Erb as deacon. Because of a throat affliction Brother Weaver soon retired from the active ministry. Brother Erb continued as deacon until his death October 11, 1908.

On October 23, 1886, votes were again taken at the schoolhouse for another minister, and Daniel Hess, Amos Hess, John M. R. Weaver, Thomas Pletcher, and Jacob A. White were the candidates named. The following day Jacob White was chosen by lot and ordained. He served until January 1889.

The next ordination was that of Michael E. Horst, who from among seven others—Daniel Hess, Amos Hess, John Shelly, John Evers, Noah Eby, Frank Horst, and Tillman Erb—was chosen by lot and ordained March 24, 1890.

Thus in the first five years or more, eight ministers and bishops had served the new congregation. Coming from large churches where plurality of ministers was customary, it was not surprising for these people to have felt the need of more than one, and usually two, three, and four ministered at one service. Of the first service attended by T. M. Erb in Kansas, he says: "I was at meeting three and one-half miles northwest from here, the first time in a schoolhouse. It was crowded, but just one preacher." In the years 1890-92 David Weaver, D. J. Zook, D. D. Zook, and M. E. Horst (who moved to Peabody in 1899) did most of the preaching; with Jacob L. Winey, Peabody, Kansas, J. S. Coffman, D. Brundage and B. Hamilton as frequent visitors.

Three years after Brother Horst's ordination, the question of ministerial help again arose and on June 18, 1893, Daniel Hess, J. M. R. Weaver and T. M. Erb were called to the lot. Of this occasion Brother Erb writes: "Bros. Miller and Hamilton preached, then the lots were cast and fell upon Bro. John Weaver and myself. Were ordained by Bro. Hamilton to preach the Word of God, teach the unconverted to come to Christ, encourage the saints and may God help us to fulfill the promise and may we be faithful workers in His vineyard, so that many souls may be brought from darkness into light. And God shall receive all the praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Brother Weaver preached his first sermon July 2, 1893, and Brother Erb, his first July 16, 1893.

Thus far has been traced ministerial work in the Mennonite group, but the Amish Mennonite group also enters in. As noted before, their leader, D. J. Zook, was already ordained in Pennsylvania. Feeling the need of assistance, he soon took up the matter and two men—Chris Byler and David Zook, Jr., were chosen. The lot fell upon the younger Zook and he was ordained by his father August 17, 1890. Later when moving back to his former home in Pennsylvania, Bishop Zook committed the bishop charge to his son, giving him all the rights and privileges of that office. This charge was recognized by the Amish group and Brother Zook, Jr., served as bishop until the two groups merged.

With the call to the ministry of these three men—Brethren Weaver, Erb, and Zook—came the fuller establishment and development of the work. Brother Erb was ordained to the office of bishop October 23, 1898, after which there were no more ordinations for eight or nine years.

With Paul Erb's (son of T. M. Erb) appointment as missionary to India came his ordination to the ministry on May 18, 1919. Since he was



Bishop T. M. Erb and family.



Minister J. M. R. Weaver and family.



Minister D. D. Zook and family.

prevented from going to India, he remained to serve his home church with his father and J. M. R. Weaver. With the death of these two men—Erb and Weaver in 1929—he became pastor and served until 1941, when he was called to teach at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana. He was released for that work after twenty-two years of service in the ministry at the Pennsylvania Church. A forceful and dynamic speaker with pleasing personality, musical ability, and willingness to serve made him an acceptable leader.

At his conversion he dedicated his life to the Lord and became active in the work of the Sunday school and church in his early teens. When at the close of World War I the way did not open for him to go to India he continued faithfully to serve in his home church and at Hesston College where he taught English and filled the office of Dean for some time. Even though his formal education may have been far in advance of some of his fellow ministers, that did not spoil the fellowship or hinder his cooperativeness. His consecration and interest in the cause of Christ and the church led to wider avenues of work and to service in church-wide boards and committees. He is Editor of the *Gospel Herald*, the official organ of the Mennonite Church, and Executive Secretary of the Mennonite General Conference.

Mention should also be made here of Allen Erb, Paul's older brother. Though not ordained in the Pennsylvania Church, he grew up in this



Minister Paul Erb and family.

community and as a young man gave active and consecrated service in the church. Upon his marriage he moved to the adjoining county of McPherson and there was soon ordained to serve as a minister in the West Liberty congregation. Later he was ordained bishop at La Junta, Colorado, where he gave many years to the administration of the Menonite Hospital and School of Nursing.

Soon after the death of the two above-named ministers (T. M. Erb and J. M. R. Weaver), Earl Buckwalter, from two others in the lot—Edwin I. Weaver and Samuel M. King—was chosen April, 1929, to serve in that capacity with Paul Erb. More is recorded later regarding his ministry.

The first ordination for another field was that of Amos Geigley, a young man from Pennsylvania, who entered the ministry March 31, 1907, and was sent to fill the pulpit of a small Mennonite church at Neutral, Kansas. On September 29 of that same year three more were called to fill pastorates in other fields—Chris Reiff to Newkirk, Oklahoma, Reuben M. Weaver to Harper, Kansas, and L. Oliver King to Manchester, Oklahoma. Those three active men, with their families, were missed. All three have now gone to their eternal reward.

The last three ordinations to the ministry at the Pennsylvania Church were for foreign mission fields. On July 12, 1936, Samuel M. King was ordained by J. G. Hartzler, with H. A. Diener assisting, shortly before leaving for India. Albert and Ralph Buckwalter were ordained on September 18, 1949, by their father assisted by J. D. Graber and J. G. Hartzler—Albert for the Argentine Chaco and Ralph for Japan.

Following the ordination of T. M. Erb in 1898, there were no more bishop ordinations at Pennsylvania Church until February 2, 1912, when Daniel H. Bender was chosen and ordained by Albrecht Schiffler of Roseland, Nebraska. J. A. Heatwole, J. M. Brunk and L. O. King were the others in the lot. After the death of T. M. Erb, Brother Bender had the bishop oversight of the Pennsylvania Church for a short time.

Again arose the matter of a new bishop for the district. Accordingly four names were presented—Joseph G. Hartzler, Windom, Kansas; Charles Diener, Canton, Kansas; Henry J. King, Wichita (Harper), Kansas and Maurice A. Yoder, Hesston, Kansas. Brother Hartzler was selected by lot and ordained at the Pennsylvania Church by Brother Erb, December 14, 1925. In 1930, he was given the oversight of the Pennsylvania Church and served as bishop there until released by his request in 1947. On June 1, 1947, Brother Earl Buckwalter, by the vote of the congregation, was ordained by J. G. Hartzler and Milo Kauffman to serve as resident bishop.

Deacon Ordinations. Upon the death of the first deacon, J. B. Erb, in 1908, Benjamin F. Buckwalter was chosen on December 13, 1908, to take his place. The manner of choice here was definite though unusual. Asked to vote, the congregation individually and unanimously voted for one man—B. F. Buckwalter. He himself was unable to fix his mind upon any one person and did not vote, thus making the vote unanimous. His faithful, fruitful life proved him to be the man of God's choice. After



Bishop Earl Buckwalter and family. Children: Lois, Martha, Esther Rose, Alice, Ralph, Albert.



Deacon B. F. Buckwalter and family, March, 1919.

serving about eighteen years he moved back to Pennsylvania and later to Wellman, Iowa, where he passed away January 19, 1943. Of the two young men considered to fill this vacancy—Gaius A. Horst and Earl Buckwalter, boyhood friends and neighbors—the former was chosen by lot. With the ordination sermon preached by J. A. Ressler of Scottdale, Pennsylvania, Gaius was ordained on January 24, 1926, by T. M. Erb, and served until he moved to Sterling, Illinois, January, 1946. That office has not been filled up to the present time, the trustees taking over some of the work previously performed by the deacon.

See "D. D. Zook" in next chapter.

In Memoriam

In the early years of his Christian experience and ministry D. D. Zook became a passionate soul-winner. His intense interest in people, his sympathetic understanding and concern made him friend and helper to many. His genuine sincerity and unassuming manner won respect and confidence. He knew no class distinctions but loved everybody, and in turn was equally loved and enjoyed by men of culture and learning and the illiterate. His unique gestures and mannerisms made him a most unforgettable character and he was known wherever he went. Large and small assemblies welcomed him to their platform. His courageous, optimistic spirit brought benediction to all. But perhaps the widest and fullest measure of usefulness came from his earnest, unctious, intercessory prayer life. His prayers for local church and community and individual needs reached world-wide dimensions. A personal friend and intercessor is gone. Of no small consequence is the loss of a man who for nearly sixty years has labored and prayed for a community. His funeral service at the Pennsylvania church in charge of Brother Earl Buckwalter bore fitting tribute and honor to his memory and the past was forgotten in the sorrow, yet victory, of the present.

5. *The Trio*

While it would be impossible to give all the ministers of the Pennsylvania Church due recognition, yet a passing tribute to the three who served together the longest is only a fitting courtesy. The names of T. M. Erb, J. M. R. Weaver, and D. D. Zook (or Tillman, "Johnnie," and "Davie" as they were familiarly known) and the Pennsylvania Church are inseparable. Ever and always are they associated in its history. Other ministers had died or moved away. They remained. With the exception of five years spent at Harper, Kansas (October 1895–November 1900), Brother Erb preached here from 1893 to 1929. Brother Weaver served approximately the same length of time, though he also lived in Texas for a few years. Ordained at the same time, their ministries also terminated in death in the same year, 1929. While Brother Zook served a shorter period of time—1891-1913—yet without interruption he served continuously in that time and often alone.

With their diverse temperaments they supplemented each other very well. Each one was a complement to the other; together they constituted a balanced group ministry.

T. M. Erb

T. M. Erb was born November 3, 1865, near Mt. Joy, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He came west with his parents in 1885 and in November 1886 married Elizabeth Hess also of Lancaster County. Soon after marriage they were baptized and united with the Pennsylvania Church.

As a businessman he made many state-wide contacts which developed natural ability as a leader and executive. He was thoroughly businesslike, systematic, accurate, punctual, neat. All this was reflected in a happy, well-governed home. Aggressive in business and community affairs, he served on city councils and school boards, was interested in worth-while projects, and did what he could to advance worthy causes.

He applied the same principles to church work. He served on various district and general boards, moderated the district conferences, preached conference sermons, and was often called to adjust church difficulties. As bishop he had a large district as compared with present-day charges. For a time he was about the only bishop in the district. His work took him to Peabody, Canton, West Liberty, Larned, and Harper, Kansas; Jet, Milan Valley, Manchester, and Newkirk, Oklahoma; and La Junta, Holbrook, and Brandon, Colorado. Besides this bishop work he was often called away for important meetings.

His connection with Hesston College and Bible School as its first business manager gave added responsibility, but he served efficiently in that capacity for twenty years—a cause and work which he loved.

He was a lively, interesting, and capable Sunday-school teacher and

superintendent. The carefully preserved list of texts from practically every book of the Bible shows the wide range of subjects used in his sermons. His love for music has been transmitted to his family, and children and grandchildren are today making worthy contributions in that field.

On September 15, 1912, he preached on "My Belief and Position on the New Birth." The next evening occurred the explosion which caused the death of a small daughter, Elva May, and nearly cost his own life. Burned severely, he spent months of painful suffering at the hospital, not to return to the church again until June 29 of the next year. He was able to be there again August 3, 1913, and preached from a cot his first sermon (following the accident) on I Peter 5:10. He continued going to services quite regularly from there on but had more or less trouble with the results of his burns. On October 21, 1928, he "preached last sermon before going away" to Pennsylvania. And that proved to be the *last*, for upon his return an amputation of the second limb proved fatal and he passed away January 29, 1929, at the age of 64 years. With the last entry in the diary on January 24—"It looks pretty much like I may not get well. For the sake of the family I'd like to stay, but if God wills, I am ready to go any time," his diary records of nearly fifty years came to a close. His influence lives on and often have there been expressions of appreciation for some message or word of encouragement he has given.

J. M. R. Weaver

J. M. R. Weaver was born October 29, 1858, near New Holland in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He was married to Anna Miller and, with his parents, came west in 1880.

Not educated in the schools, he became a self-educated man. Beyond the average, he was versed in the Scriptures, in profane and sacred history. He often told of his grandmother who taught him these Bible stories. To have sat at his feet in a Bible History class would have been a coveted privilege. His frequent reference to the works of Josephus and *Martyrs Mirror* brought illustrations of spiritual truth. Though there were greater men by far in intellect and scholarship, perhaps few equaled or excelled in understanding of the types and shadows and symbolisms of Old Testament History. The bars and sockets of the ancient tabernacle, its colors and skins, and furniture; the offerings and the sacrifices became eloquent with meaning as he applied the truth to Christian experience. Monotonous repetitions, obscure details and even long genealogies took on new life and meaning. There was purpose in the journeys, names, battles, incidents. He had a rare gift to discover these truths.

Naturally quick and impulsive, he was a forceful speaker. Though sometimes his English was imperfect, yet his earnestness in exposition of Scripture and illustrations from Scripture made the listener quite unaware of the imperfect English.

Converted from the drink habit he was ever and always a strong advocate of what the grace of God could do—"Grace greater than all our

sins," grace greater than habit, heredity, circumstance or environment—abounding grace. True, the transgressor would reap what he had sown, but "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Still he maintained that not *because* of sin but in *spite* of it, one could, with sin pardoned and soul purified, transcend all former levels.

He did not condone sin. He gave no sanction or license to evil, but rather extolled the grace of God that reaches down to where man is—even the lowest—and lifts him up to heights beyond. He recognized the fact that, while man *should* not stoop to such levels, yet he often does, and even there the Saviour finds and saves him. As one thus redeemed he knew this phase of human nature. He knew the habits and temptations of the wayward man. In his earlier ministry large numbers of this group came to hear him. He was able to reach this class. He was also called to officiate at some of their funerals and fearlessly preached the truth.

In 1894 he, with his family, drove with horse and buggy, back to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and wherever he preached crowds gathered to hear him. Having known him as a young man, they were anxious to hear him now.

On conference grounds he was often the central figure of in-between-session groups. His messages were powerful and brought many to the altar of prayer. Dynamic in the pulpit, mighty in the Word, and successful as an evangelist, yet he was not gifted as pastor or personal worker. Not all felt free to approach him with personal problems. This is no reflection upon his character, simply a recognition of limitations which he also recognized.

His bold and fearless denunciation of sin, though welcomed by many, was offensive to others and brought some misunderstanding and opposition.

It is to be regretted that he did not always appropriate and exemplify the grace he believed in. He was not always a good representative and sometimes yielded to discouragement. Maybe it was as his long-time friend, R. J. Heatwole, put it—"He was not discouraged, but his courage got a little low." Anyway, it was hard for him to labor on when it seemed nothing was being accomplished. But this failure to live up to his own standards he did not condone or excuse, neither did he minimize nor nullify the grace of God. It was still the same "power of God unto salvation." Through this grace and power he was enabled to leave this world in the triumphs of the faith, June 12, 1929, at the age of seventy years.

D. D. Zook

Quite opposite in make-up was Brother D. D. Zook. It seemed he knew no discouragement though his soul was often and severely tried. When inclement weather brought the question: "Will there be church today? Shall we go?" the answer invariably would be: "Well, D. D. Zook will be there!" He was constant, always there, always the same.

His was a different type of preaching from that of Brothers Erb and

Weaver, but equally effective and powerful. In simple language he made plain the doctrine of the atonement and to him are indebted scores of people for their knowledge of the plan of salvation. There was deep and thorough indoctrination and church members knew well the meaning of sin, conviction, repentance, regeneration, adoption, consecration, and sanctification. Of course some knew only theoretically but many knew experientially. He was a pastor and personal worker, one who had a sympathetic understanding of the human heart. People from many walks of life, went to him even at odd hours for spiritual help. Young men in the fields left their teams to talk with him. At the church he remained to pray with others sometimes until early morning hours. He was a spiritual diagnostician who could discover and uncover heart needs and point the way to victory. Many went to him with a burden but left with a song; many went in darkness but left with light. He understood and one was conscious of a loving, sympathetic friend. Of course there were exceptions. Not all saw him in this light nor understood or appreciated his ministry. But for those who were helped there lingers deep and lasting appreciation for the one who led them "into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

His pulpit mannerisms were unforgettable. He usually wore a black shirt, without a tie, under an ordinary business coat. He had a red beard trimmed rather short. Through his black unparted hair he would frequently run his fingers as he preached. His gestures were constant, and he never stood still behind the pulpit very long. When others preached he expressed his agreement with a frequent "Yes, sir; yes, sir."

He was born near Belleville, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, February 8, 1863, came to Harvey County, Kansas, with his parents in 1885, later married Ella Zook of his native state, and lived on or near the parental home in Harvey County, Kansas, until he passed away February 13, 1948, at the age of 85. His funeral service at the Pennsylvania Church in charge of Brother Earl Buckwalter bore fitting tribute to his memory. A personal friend and intercessor was gone. Of no small consequence was the loss of a man who for sixty years had labored and prayed for a community.

See "In Memoriam" on page 21.

6. *Beginning Years and Their Problems*

In these beginning years—the first decade or more—foundations were laid, precedents established and standards formulated that were to govern, more or less, the future church.

In this early period when modern conveniences were unknown, roads unimproved and transportation slow and sometimes difficult; with prolonged sub-zero weather and few trees or hedges to break the Kansas wind, yet there seemed to be time and desire for the service of the Lord. With few outside activities, the social, cultural and spiritual interests centered in the "meetinghouse." Even in this pioneer period weekday services were quite common. Visiting ministers made it a point to stop with the little flock. They were used whenever available, preaching forenoon, afternoon and evening. Sometimes they stopped only a day or two; then returned again a few days or weeks later for another engagement.

Special meetings—baptismal, counsel meetings, preparatory meetings, and others—were often held weekdays, even Saturday or Monday.

Because some were unaccustomed to evening meetings and protracted meetings, there was at first some prejudice and opposition which required much tact and patience in overcoming. To R. J. Heatwole was given special wisdom to guide the work in this respect. At various times he secured the services of his cousin J. S. Coffman, whose warm, friendly personality won the interest and confidence of the young people. Coffman's first appearance seems to have been March 24, 1886. But this matter of evening meetings did not receive much support from some of the older ones. Tactfully presenting the matter at a morning service, Brother Coffman wondered if, since he was here anyway, would it not be nice to have a candlelight service? Soon he would leave. Should they not make use of the time and have an evening meeting? Put to a vote, the young people, even nonmembers, voted unanimously for the evening meeting. They brought their kerosene lamps to the schoolhouse and had meetings. The ice was broken, opposition ceased, and before long evening meetings became a regular feature.

Opposition to protracted meetings was also overcome by tactfully planning for meetings in the various schoolhouses and homes of the community—one evening here, another there—until in the course of a week a number of meetings were held. Thus prejudices were broken down and the way opened to work for the ingathering of the lost.

Perhaps a little excerpt from the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* March 1943, page 2, concerning this man of God who so profoundly impressed his audience with Gospel truth, would be in order. "John S. Coffman was well qualified for the work of an evangelist. His dignified, alert, warm, friendly personality won for him respect and friendship everywhere. He had a fair education, a rich background of human associations,

and a sympathetic interest in the welfare of others. He had a definite conversion experience, knew that he was saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, and had witnessed the power of God in his own life and in the lives of others. He knew the Word of God and was able to preach it with conviction and power. A great passion for souls burned in his heart which caused him to spend long hours with God in prayer." Such was the man whom the Lord used "in breaking open spiritual trails over which others could carry on the work in larger dimensions" in this infant, struggling congregation on western plains.

Noteworthy is the fact that the three future leaders of the Pennsylvania church—T. M. Erb, J. M. R. Weaver, and D. D. Zook—were converted under the ministry of Brother Coffman. Of this experience Brother Zook says that he was powerfully convicted of sin one day when out in the field plowing. In desperation he cried: "I'll do anything, Lord, if you'll only show me how to have faith!" At the meeting that night, Brother Coffman, pointing his finger right at him, said: "Young man, you say you don't have faith! I'll tell you how to get faith—go where you hear the Word of God preached." A great burden lifted, and soon he was saved. In later meetings these four men worked harmoniously together, one in understanding and teaching of salvation truth.

In contrast to these young men who found the Lord was another young man, of Mennonite parentage, who also sought the Lord in the Coffman meeting, but evidently did not find Him. He later became a skilled and efficient physician and in the early days of his practice again showed desire for the Lord. In later years he was honored and promoted to high medical, fraternal and civic organizations in the state, but was robbed, it seemed, of early interests in things spiritual. What would have been the story had he been saved for God and the church as these others!

But the record of evangelistic effort would not be complete without mention of others who shared a part, also the part R. J. Heatwole, a layman, had in securing their services. Up to 1895 the following ministered to the congregation at various times (the date accompanying some of the names gives their first appearance, but most of them came more than once): Jacob Eschleman, Sedgwick, Kansas, River Brethren (officially known as Brethren in Christ) (1888); Noah Metzler, Indiana (1889); Jacob Winey, Peabody and Birmingham, Kansas (1890); Joseph Byler, Belleville, Pennsylvania (1890); J. M. Shenk, Elida, Ohio (1891); Andrew Shenk, Oronogo, Missouri (1892); D. D. Miller, Middlebury, Indiana (1893); D. G. Lapp, Roseland, Nebraska (1894); George R. Brunk, Win-dom, Kansas (1894); D. J. Johns, Indiana (1895); J. S. Hartzler, Goshen, Indiana; Daniel Kauffman, Versailles, Missouri; Albrecht Schiffer, Rose-land, Nebraska; and John Blosser, Ohio. All these and others not named, had a part in molding this new group of believers.

7. Ministering in Nearby Communities

R. J. Heatwole though a layman, was the leader in bringing Mennonite evangelists and evangelism into Kansas and adjoining states. An article in the *Gospel Herald* by L. O. King says of him: "His aggressiveness in the Lord's work soon brought him in touch with the settlers as they came in increasing number to Kansas and afterward to Oklahoma and Colorado. He was appointed the Kansas representative on the Mennonite Evangelizing Board (later the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities). Every church and often every isolated Mennonite family was reached by him. He was usually accompanied by a minister." As they together visited these fields—one preaching, the other singing—they were called the "Moody-Sankey team." "R. J." loved to sing, and taught and led singing. He was always ready with a verse, a song, a story, or an exhortation. In the local community "Uncle Reuben and Aunt Margaret" were welcome and interesting visitors in many homes.

He not only took visiting ministers on these preaching-visiting tours, but home ministers as well. Sometimes it was groups of young people who went along to help sing or pray or exhort. That was long before the days of "Gospel teams" or quartets, and seems to have been in advance of their day.

These itineraries took them to Peabody, Canton, West Liberty, Nickerson, Larned, Marion, Osborne, Ransom, Ness City, Galva, Harper, Decatur, Hartford and other places in Kansas, besides Oklahoma and Colorado.

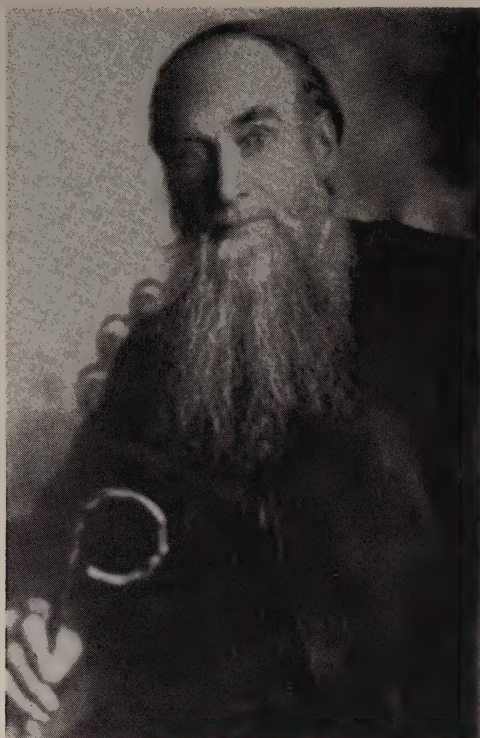
They were warmly received by these isolated, pioneer family or congregational groups of the frontier. Mennonites are no longer living at the majority of these places. Many of them have died or moved away—possibly their descendants remain—but no doubt many more encouraged and moved God-ward in pioneering days; and the work was not in vain. The experiences of these trips were often recounted at home by "R. J." and remain as precious memories.

In an article in the *Gospel Herald* of November 11, 1920, on "Fifty Mennonite Leaders" Oliver King, Hutchinson, Kansas, says:

This activity was made possible by the devotion and sacrifice of his companion. Their home often sheltered for weeks at a time and even months many who had no homes, this too when their means were very short.

Many of the older people now living in Kansas bore testimony of the spiritual help received from him. His knowledge of Scripture, his love for song, his interest in poetry contributed to make him a very agreeable and interesting companion. Wherever he would go he always had a group of interested listeners about him. He always had a song ready for every occasion.

As his physical strength failed, his mind still keen to help, he would write to many friends, especially ministers, and even suggesting texts and



"Uncle" Reuben J. Heatwole.

lines of thought for a sermon. He departed this life May 31, 1921, and was buried in the cemetery near the West Liberty Church. He will continue to live in the hearts and lives of those who knew him.

Continuing the tribute—the Lord has honored him with a large posterity of mission workers, both at home and abroad. There are ministers, missionaries, doctors, nurses. There is varied and multiplied talent in many fields now expending itself in the work he loved and began.

8. *Counsel and Preparatory Meetings and Communion*

With the organization of this new congregation soon came the establishment of regular forms and services characteristic of the church. Of these the semiannual *Counsel Meetings* will be considered. They may have been held during the week at first but at least from 1888 they were held Sunday morning. With the possible exception of a few years in the beginning, these have always been an open personal testimony meeting, not a bench-by-bench or congregational standing response, or retiring individually to a private room. They have proved to be times of heart-searching and blessing as failure and need or victory have been reported. Heart-searching sermons led to self-examination and it was not too easy to profess peace if that were not the actual condition. Even so, through the years it was not uncommon for one enjoying present salvation to ask forgiveness for having previously professed what he did not possess. Babies in Christ were helped as they listened to the more mature give testimony. Some of these meetings lasted until 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. and what the diary says of one—"We had a very spiritual counsel meeting"—could be said of many others. With this spirit these meetings continue to be quite free from careless, indifferent formality.

Preparatory Meetings were held during the week, first in the daytime, later in the evening and usually on Saturday evening. These meetings were held in order to more carefully prepare the members for the communion service. The previous good counsel-meeting, with self-examination emphasis, seemed to make the preparatory meetings unnecessary, and since they seemed to be more a matter of custom than of interest or necessity they came to an end after April 29, 1926.

The first recorded communion service was held September 27, 1885, but likely there were previous ones. By 1888 there were forty communicants; 1895, ninety-seven; 1906, one hundred twenty-seven; and November 20, 1910, one hundred and fifty. These meetings are held semi-annually.

The seriousness of going to the Lord's table with an unprepared heart was so impressed that quite frequently some refrained. If eating and drinking unworthily brought condemnation then they were afraid to partake. Not often did members stay back because of trouble with others, or because of the bishop's request but because of themselves—a good commentary upon teaching given from the pulpit, and also upon Paul's words: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself . . ." (I Cor. 11:28, 29). While all were encouraged to partake of the sacrament, yet they were to do so only if their hearts were prepared. There was much patience with the wayward, and many came to know the true meaning of a communion service.

9. Conferences

Among the first special services mentioned is that of a local Harvest meeting held in 1885 or 1886. The next—a semiannual conference April 8, 1887—is merely mentioned. A two-day session of the semiannual or “Home Conference” met again April 6 and 7, 1888. Caleb Winey opened the meeting. B. F. Hamilton read the lesson and “spoke on the state of the church forty years ago and earlier, and her present decline.” “Daniel Brundage officiated at the business.” Eighteen or twenty subjects were discussed. Communion was observed with fifty participating. R. J. Heatwole served as secretary. Another “Home” conference was held in 1889.

The district semiannual conference again convened at Pennsylvania, May 1-3, 1891. The following quotation shows that the group was still very small: “All our bishops, ministers and deacons of McPherson, Harvey and Marion counties, Kansas, were present, also three brethren from Rose-land, Nebraska, besides Bishop Schiffler; Bro. Ernst of Johnson County, Kansas, and a number of brethren and sisters from the four churches in Kansas.” Of the nine questions discussed two are given here: “Are our members justifiable in holding, permitting in their homes or attending play parties of any kind?” A negative answer was given. Another: “Shall a member have the privilege to use his influence against temperance or prohibition?” was also answered in the negative. (This position was reversed later on.) Following this conference Preparatory meeting was held Saturday afternoon, the regular “edification meeting” that evening, and communion Sunday morning with seventy-five communing. “Thus ended a season of great reviving and spiritual refreshing to our spiritual body”—a diary quotation which shows the reaction to full days and varied meetings.

After the decision in 1891 to change from semiannual to annual conference, the first of these to meet at Pennsylvania was on October 6 and 7, 1892. Three bishops, twelve ministers, and five deacons were present. Bishop S. C. Miller served as Moderator and “declared all members present . . . eligible to vote on all questions.” Thirteen questions were discussed.

Only church conferences were held in these years, but March 28, 29, 1895, marks the beginning of Sunday-school conferences also and this first one was held at Pennsylvania. Of special interest is the wide variety of topics used sixty-two years ago emphasizing missions, teacher qualifications, aims of teaching, dealing with the different age groups, and methods of teaching. Even the use of the blackboard was considered. It is also interesting to note the variety of speakers, the use of laymen including women who appeared on the following program:



The Hess Reunion held in 1907.

PROGRAMME

Of the First Mennonite S.S. Conference
of KANSAS AND NEBRASKA to Be Held
MARCH 28 AND 29, 1895, In The
PENNSYLVANIA MEETING HOUSE,
Seven Miles North-West of NEWTON, KANSAS.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON

- 2:00—Devotional Exercises and Address of Welcome Tillman Erb.
2:15—What did you come here for?
All are expected to respond.
2:45—What shall we make our future S. School? J. M. R. Weaver.
3:15—How to make all S. Schools Evergreen Lemmon Beck, D. S. King.
3:30—How to create life and promote interest in the S. School
Geo. R. Brunk, Fannie Landis, Elsie Rhine.
4:00—Question Box and Reports of all Sunday Schools represented.

THURSDAY EVENING

- 7:30—Song Service Reuben Weaver.
8:00—Prayer M. Horst.
The Sunday School at Work:
(a) In the Teachers' Meeting.
Daniel Hess, Jacob Burkhardt. (Nebraska)
(b) At the Bible Reading.
Henry Horst, Harvey Evers, Minnie Yoder.
(c) At the Social Meeting.
Noah Eby, E. M. Shellenberger.

FRIDAY MORNING

- 9:00—Opening Remarks Caleb Winey.
Prayer S. C. Miller.
9:15—The Necessity of Prayer and Consecration for the S.S. Worker
J. Y. Shelly, Chris Snyder.
9:45—How to bring S.S. Pupils to a decision to serve Christ
D. D. Zook, J. M. Shenk. (Ohio)
10:15—Sociability Daniel Lapp, Amanda Shelly.
10:35—Sunday School Mission A. L. Hess, Benj. King.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON

- 2:00—Remarks and Prayer D. Yoder. (Missouri)
2:15—How to deal with the "Stay-Aways."
(a) Fathers and Mothers. David Weaver, Sen., Anna Shupe.
(b) Young Men and Women. Amos Wenger, Samuel G. Lapp.
(c) Little Children. Mary Eby, Susie Hess.
3:00—The Sunday School Class Daniel Kauffman. (Missouri)
J. H. Hershey, (Olathe, Kansas)
3:20—Use of Blackboard before the School Wallace Kauffman,
T. J. Coopridger.
3:40—Review.

FRIDAY EVENING

- 7:00—Song and Praise Amos Hess.
7:30—Open Conference.
One to five minute speeches.
8:30—Question Box opened and answered.
Critic Caleb Winey.
Closing address and prayer A. Schiffler and S. C. Miller.
After each topic, ten to twenty minutes may be devoted to general discussion.
All the exercises will be interspersed with singing out of Hymns and Tunes, and
Gospel Hymns. Bring your books with you.

THE COMMITTEE

According to the diary, Daniel Kauffman was moderator; T. M. Erb, secretary, and George R. Brunk, assistant secretary. "This closed our first, but hope not last, S.S. Conference. All enjoyed it very much."

Five years later, October 3-6, 1900, the church conference met again at the Pennsylvania Church with David Garber, moderator; T. M. Erb, assistant; C. D. Yoder and Charles Burkhard, secretaries; and R. C. Yoder, D. G. Lapp, and Amos Hess, as resolutions committee.

Advancement in type of program and in attendance are observed from this time on. To the question: "What is entire consecration? and when should we be thus consecrated?" the answer is "Consecration is the giving of all that we have and all that we are to the honor and glory of God—as soon as we are converted." Another question: "Should we . . . advocate and teach total abstinence from intoxicating drinks?" gives the affirmative stand of the church on this issue. J. L. Winey was appointed conference evangelist. R. J. Heatwole and J. G. Wenger, laymen, were chosen to find new fields of labor, and those called of God to work in these fields were asked to correspond with these men. It is interesting to note the responsibilities delegated to laymen, how they were used, and the large place they filled. They served sometimes as moderator of church conferences, as secretary, as members of the resolutions committee, as song leader or as president of the district mission board; ladies also served in some of the capacities. With the work thus delegated to lay members they were able to exercise and develop ability and relieve the ordained men of extra burdens. Preachers thus had more time for ministering the Word and "feeding the flock" and less need "to serve tables." All this made for a spirit of freedom and fellowship.

With more congregations to entertain conference, it was not until October 13-18, 1909, that Pennsylvania had another session. George R. Brunk, Sr. (later of Virginia), served as moderator and also preached the conference sermon. The choristers were the veteran song leader, C. Z. Yoder of Smithville, Ohio, and R. M. Weaver; resolutions committee Chris Snyder, J. M. Brunk, and C. A. Hartzler; David Garber and David Zook were appointed as Conference Evangelists. A total of about four hundred, with thirty-eight bishops, ministers, and deacons were present. "The most largely attended conference" (up to this time). Two hundred and thirty-five communed on Sunday. The following day, Sunday-school conference convened. Evening meetings continued for about a week and a number came out on the Lord's side.

The next and last district assembly at Pennsylvania was August 12-15, 1940. In this was included church, Sunday School, Bible School, Mission and Y.P.M. conferences. C. A. Hartzler of Tiskilwa, Illinois, and Aaron Mast of Belleville, Pennsylvania, were guest speakers. Conspicuous was the absence of former, active conference members. Obviously a new generation had grown into the work. Noticeable also was the increased activity and attendance (too large now for the church building), and the enlarged organization and new leadership. Marked changes were thus evident in the personnel, leadership, methods, and numbers in the fifty-

five years between the first little conference in 1885 and the last one in 1940.

Since the Hesston church and Hesston College, with their combined physical facilities are so nearby, conferences assigned to Pennsylvania and Hesston have been entertained co-operatively by these two congregations.

10. Bible Normals

Next in importance possibly to the conferences were the Bible Normals. The first of these, with three sessions daily, was held October 19-27, 1903. All speakers made worth-while contributions, but outstanding seems to have been Noah Metzler, of Indiana. He had asked for a room alone in a nearby home (M. M. Zimmerman's) for prayer and meditation. His messages came with unction and power. His portrayal of Israel's journey from Egypt, through the wilderness into Canaan made clear and personal Christian experience in its various stages—from the Egypt of sin to the Canaan of victory and rest. He was a holy man who walked and talked with God. His saintliness, deep piety, and humility made one conscious of the Divine Presence. Hearts were touched. A number, even from other denominations, confessed to soul hunger and need and sought help. The eight-day program was as follows:

PROGRAMME

Of the Bible Normal
To Be Held In The MENNONITE CHURCH NEAR TROUSDALE
HARVEY COUNTY, KANSAS, From OCTOBER 19 to 27, 1903

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—II Tim. 2:15.

MONDAY EVENING

OCTOBER 19

Organization and Gospel Sermon

TUESDAY

9:15 Opening Services
9:30 Plan of Salvation, Repentance J. M. Shenk
10:30 Law and Grace David Garber
11:30 Noon Intermission
1:15 Devotional
1:30 The Children of Israel Typifying Christian Experience Noah Metzler
2:30 Ordinances, Their use and abuse Geo. R. Brunk
7:00 Workers Hour
8:00 Gospel Sermon

WEDNESDAY

9:15 Devotional
9:30 Plan of Salvation, Justification and Regeneration J. M. Shenk
10:30 Law and Grace David Garber
11:30 Noon
1:15 Devotional
1:30 The Children of Israel Typifying Christian Experience Noah Metzler
2:30 Ordinances, Their use and abuse Geo. R. Brunk
7:00 Workers Hour
8:00 Gospel Sermon

THURSDAY

9:15 Devotional
9:30 Plan of Salvation, Consecration J. M. Shenk
10:30 Law and Grace David Garber

11:30 Noon
 1:15 Devotional
 1:30 The Children of Israel Typifying Christian Experience Noah Metzler
 2:30 Ordinances, Their use and abuse Geo. R. Brunk
 7:00 Workers Hour
 8:00 Gospel Sermon

FRIDAY

9:15 Devotional
 9:30 Plan of Salvation, Sanctification J. M. Shenk
 10:30 Training Children David Garber
 11:30 Noon
 1:15 Devotional
 1:30 The Children of Israel Typifying Christian Experience Noah Metzler
 2:30 Church Officials, Their Qualification and Ordination Geo. R. Brunk
 7:00 Song Service, Conducted by R. M. Weaver
 8:00 Gospel Sermon

SATURDAY

9:15 Devotional
 9:30 Plan of Salvation, Glorification J. M. Shenk
 10:30 Training Children David Garber
 11:30 Noon
 1:15 Devotional
 1:30 The Children of Israel Typifying Christian Experience Noah Metzler
 2:30 Church Officials, Their Qualification and Ordination Geo. R. Brunk
 7:00 Missionary Meeting
 8:00 Gospel Sermon

SUNDAY

9:30 Preaching
 11:00 Sunday School
 Afternoon will be devoted to Children's Meeting
 7:00 Missionary Meeting
 8:00 Gospel Sermon

MONDAY

9:15 Devotional
 9:30 Infirmities Geo. R. Brunk
 10:30 Teaching from I John
 11:30 Noon
 1:15 Devotional
 1:30 The Children of Israel Typifying Christian Experience Noah Metzler
 2:30 Open Conference
 7:00 Workers Meeting
 8:00 Gospel Sermon

TUESDAY

9:15 Devotional
 9:30 Teaching from I John
 10:30 General Review
 11:30 Noon
 1:15 Devotional
 1:30 Church Accessories J. M. Shenk
 2:30 Closing Exercises
 7:00 Praise Service
 8:00 Gospel Sermon

The second Bible Normal was held December 17-21, 1908. David Garber and D. G. Lapp were the instructors and among the subjects taught were "Development of Christian Character," "Domestic Relation-

ship," "Marriage," "Practical Piety in the Home," "Dangers that Threaten the Church," "Second Coming of Christ," and "Eternal Punishment." Query boxes preceded each evening's sermon. There were six confessions.

The third and last Bible Normal met December 28, 1926 to January 1, 1927. With Henry King and Harry Diener instructors, the following subjects were considered: "The Book of James," "Nonresistance," "Use of the Lord's Day," "Atonement," "Assurance," "Signs of Christ's Coming," and "After Death—What?" A sermon followed each evening session.

Another Bible Normal should be mentioned but with no material available and only the memory of one or two to rely upon little can be given more than that it was held for the local people early in the winter of 1903 and was conducted by a minister of the Dunkard Church (Church of the Brethren). As recalled it was largely a study of the life of Christ and the Harmony of the Gospels.

11. *The Sunday School*

We now retrace the history of the early years to bring together the related activities of that period. Not only was the church established but other organizations, which were to have a large place in the future development of the work, came into being. The Sunday school, prayer meeting, and Bible Reading were instruments under God of great power and blessing.

The Sunday school of the Pennsylvania Church has had an interesting history, and reminders of its early days are important and valuable. No one remains in the congregation today who remembers the first one. The earliest recollection of one sister is that she was taught the German "A B. C's."

It has been difficult to determine the date of organization for, according to some authorities, it was in 1885 (and likely this is correct) and according to others, June 12, 1887. It was through some tribulation and difficulty that this institution came into being, for there was opposition to this innovation. "The Eastern conservatism of the Pennsylvanian was reflected in the Pennsylvania congregation. This so-called conservatism was opposed to . . . the Sunday school. The Methodist revival . . . had just swept the country, therefore the early church fathers . . . in their cold formalism condemned this enthusiasm as of the world" (From John David Zehr's manuscript—"The Rise of the Pennsylvania Congregation"). Even one who later became one of its strongest advocates had thought the Sunday school was worldly, and a bishop said it was of the devil. However, the Amish Mennonites of Mifflin County, accustomed to Sunday school and evening meetings, were more tolerant than the Mennonites from Lancaster County.

But for every new undertaking there must be a leader, and again R. J. Heatwole was that leader. To him belongs largely the credit for the founding, promoting, and inspiration of this new Sunday school. He saw the need, caught the vision, and directed all his energies into establishing the work. Tact, time, and patience were needed. The need of the young people, their hunger, and the example of Nehemiah urged him on. There remain a few who remember his comments on Nehemiah 8:1-8—Ezra, the "superintendent," with twelve or fourteen "teachers," "read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." From these passages he found sanction for a Sunday school, as also for his "Amen and Amen" (v. 6) in closing his prayers. Thus fortified he went forward with boldness, confidence, and courage to start the first Mennonite Sunday school in the West. Of this experience his daughter, Susie, says: "Father felt the need of the young folks being taught Bible, and since no one seemed to feel responsible or the need for it, he appointed himself a committee of one to start it." Not

content only to invite the neighborhood children, he gathered them up and brought them to the Sunday school. With the old carriage and the wagon with a frame all around the edge for seats, Brother Heatwole and son, Henry, would gather all they could find until there were two loads. The Enos Overholt family of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church living nearby, would also bring their own large family and as many others as possible. "R. J." served as superintendent, chorister and teacher, and his wife, "Aunt Margaret" served as the other teacher until more could be found. One illustration of tact used by Brother Heatwole and a story often told by him concerns the older women who did not want a class. To them it was wrong. When approached with: "Wär' es net scheen wenn sie also en Klass' hätte?" (Were it not nice if you also had a class?) one replied: "Ja aber wir sin'es net so gewohnt" (Yes, but we're not so used to it). But before long they came asking for a class which was taught in German by Brother Heatwole.

From the writings of R. J. Heatwole, and as remembered by others, it seems certain he was the first superintendent, but the Erb diaries report no Sunday school before 1887 and that with J. A. White as superintendent. Evidently these discrepancies are due to the more or less unorganized and unreported work of the first few years. The Sunday school in 1887 from June 12 to October 16 with J. A. White as superintendent was held in the afternoon. The next year—April 22 to September 16, 1888—with R. J. Heatwole superintending, Sunday school and preaching were both held one Sunday morning and Sunday school the alternate Sunday afternoon. The same order prevailed again the following year, April 28 to September 15, 1889, with Brother Heatwole serving again as superintendent. The Sunday school in 1890 began April 13 with T. M. Erb, superintendent; John Y. Shelly, assistant; and D. D. Zook, secretary. These services alternated as before, until July 13, when it was decided "to have it in afternoon now on every Sunday." On November 2, the diary says: "This was the first time we had the Sunday school right after church," and that order continued, also the school continued to the end of the year. The diary reference to "Amish church and Sunday school" on November 9, 1890, would indicate that, in name at least, the two groups were still meeting separately and alternately. With J. M. R. Weaver as superintendent, January 1, 1891, marks the beginning of an evergreen Sunday school (perhaps an obsolete expression, but meaning one open the year around), following again the preaching service. This order of service was chosen because of opposition to the Sunday school and gave those who opposed it opportunity to go home if they chose to do so. This practice has been followed ever since, even after a few unsatisfactory trials of reverse order.

On March 20, 1892, J. M. R. Weaver was re-elected superintendent, with T. M. Erb as assistant and J. W. Burkhart as secretary. December 18 of the same year T. M. Erb became superintendent, J. M. R. Weaver, assistant, and R. M. Weaver, secretary.

This list of officers is given because they seem to belong to that

infant, organizational period of the Sunday school. Among the teachers of that early period were T. M. Erb and his sisters, Mary and Susie (Susie at fourteen teaching a class of twenty), Mrs. Ben Shoup, who taught the older women in the corner, Amos and Abe Hess, and Lora King, from whose class came future teachers—Elsie Byler, Lottie Weaver, Anna Hess, Susie Heatwole, Lena Horst and Dora Hess.

Under the supervision and instruction of these leaders the work prospered. Faith brought fruition; labor brought reward; and desire brought realization in a growing, prosperous, and spiritual Sunday school. From a beginning of one or two classes there were in eighteen years, eighteen large and active classes. Then Pennsylvania Sunday School had the reputation of being a very noisy school. This was not necessarily because of disorder, but because of earnest, enthusiastic discussion of the lesson, and because of all being in one room. Another reason may be found in the answer given at a Quarterly Sunday School Conference, September, 1907, when; in discussing "Difficulties in Sunday School to Be Overcome" the speaker said that "the greatest difficulty is lack of room and classes too large." That, however, has not been a problem since using the basement for the primary department.

Evangelism and missions had a large place as is evidenced by the large number who have gone out into active work. It is remembered by a few that in the year 1902 or earlier, Elder Noah Zook of the Brethren in Christ Church, when holding a service, definitely asked the Lord to send forth from this congregation ten workers for the foreign field. The Lord more than answered by sending out fourteen—to India, to Africa, to China, to Japan, to South America, and to Jamaica. Most of these have gone in the first quarter of the century. Second generation missionaries are now preparing to go. For the glory of God may we humbly record that five of the workers sent to the Mennonite Mission in India come from this community—Lydia Ellen Schertz, Edwin I. Weaver, and Samuel King from the Pennsylvania congregation, and supported by it, and Milton Vogt and Millie Page Brenneman from Hesston. In addition and more recently, Albert and Ralph Buckwalter respectively have been sent as missionaries to Argentina and Japan, and Delbert Erb to Argentina.

Besides these missionaries to foreign lands, nearly a score have answered the call to city missions and charitable institutions, while another score has gone into the ministry. Not all of these have gone out under Mennonite boards or into Mennonite pulpits—and there is no desire to take credit where it is not due—but it is nevertheless true that these were all once members of the Pennsylvania Sunday School.

This Sunday school also found avenues of service nearer home in sponsoring for longer or shorter periods of time, three mission Sunday schools—at the Tiffin schoolhouse (District 36), the Lehman school, and the Perkins school. Some of these had good interest and attendance and filled a real need; others soon died out. Daniel Hess, Harry Buckwalter and David Reiff served as superintendents.

Besides missionary instruction the Pennsylvania Sunday School was also strong in its temperance emphasis. Definite teaching against liquor and tobacco by R. J. Heatwole, J. M. R. Weaver, R. M. Weaver, and T. M. Erb, and occasional temperance programs made lasting impressions.

State and county Sunday-school workers sometimes addressed the school and kept alive the needs of Sunday-school work. Annual reports and financial support were given to the county organization, and a spirit of co-operation was encouraged.

A more detailed list of the workers of this active Sunday school would be interesting, but with no records preserved of the early years only a very incomplete report is possible. Near the beginning of the second decade a new surge of life and interest was manifest and seems to be the logical time to divide this record. Beginning this period Noah Eby as superintendent, A. L. Hess, assistant, and Bert Shoup, secretary-treasurer, were on Dec. 31, 1895, elected for the coming year. Brother Eby capably served as superintendent for eight or nine years, the longest of any; and his life of deep piety, humility and holy joy was the inspiration of many. He is the only survivor of this early group.

Twenty different superintendents (as per records available) have served in the advanced department. Earl Buckwalter and Oliver Miller served seven years each. Others who led the school for two years or more were R. M. Weaver, Allen Erb, M. M. Weaver, Vernon Reiff, Samuel King, Fred Grove, Nelson Kauffman, Eldon Risser, Glen Hershberger, Melvin Jantz, and Vernon Blosser.

Of the many secretaries that kept the records Frank King, Fred Grove, Elmer King, and Elsie White each served three years. The oldest to serve was "Grandpa Weaver" who was in his early seventies. The secretary books reveal interesting things. Some secretaries were neat and careful, recording, not only necessary items, but extras; such as, the weather, special programs, and visiting speakers. Some were not so careful.

A sample page of one of the older books may interest present-day secretaries:

Mennonite Sunday School

Jan. 6, 1900

Opened by singing No. 197

Title of Lesson: "Jesus Anointed at Bethany"

Golden Text: "She hath done what she could." Mark 14:8.

Study of lesson—30 minutes

No. 245—Singing by the school

No. of officers	3
No. of teachers	10
No. of pupils	128
No. of visitors	4
Total attendance	145
Offering	\$1.20

This report was read to the school each Sunday.

An interesting notation appearing in the book September 30, 1909, follows:

Whereas, we must from now on keep a complete record of both advanced S.S. and Primary Dept. as well as a total for same each Sunday, and

Whereas, this book is so nearly gone and cannot be used conveniently for keeping this record complete as it should be kept, the unanimous voice of the Executive Committee of the Sunday School is practically as follows:

Be it enacted that we have our Secretary have book printed and bound same as diagram presented to us on Sept. 26th, 1909, same to be used solely for our Sunday School Reports. Our new book to contain 100 sheets or 200 pages—two reports on a page, making 400 reports or those of about eight years. Same to cost (as per quotation of Printer) about four dollars (\$4.00).

Frank D. King, Secretary.

A sample page from this book shows its simplicity:

Name of Sec. _____	Date _____		
	Advanced	Primary	Total
Number of Officers			
Number of Regular Teachers			
Number of Substitute Teachers			
Number of Visitors			
Number of Visitors primary from Adv.			
Number of Regular Pupils			
Total Attendance			
Amount of Collection			

The list of teachers is long, perhaps around two hundred, serving from one to forty-five years or more. This number is, however, reduced by the incomplete records. But the names available of those who taught ten years or more are given as follows:

B. F. Buckwalter	Lena Horst
Earl Buckwalter	Mrs. S. B. King
Rose Buckwalter	Emma King Risser
T. M. Erb	Ephraim Risser
Paul Erb	John Roupp
Alta Erb	M. B. Weaver
Mrs. J. M. Grove	M. M. Weaver
Alta Grove	Albert Weaver

Though not included in the ten-year list, yet no teachers' list of the Pennsylvania Sunday School would seem complete without the names of J. M. R. Weaver, D. D. Zook, A. L. Hess, Emma Grove, Belle Neuhauser, George Roupp, Maria Weaver, Elmer White, and Ella McFarlane of the earlier days.

Mere names may mean little to strangers, but to those who belonged to the large Pennsylvania Sunday School family, the following list of teachers for the year 1910 may not be wearisome:

Advanced Department.

Class No. 1.	Mrs. Anna King
" "	2. Samuel Buckwalter
" "	3. Eli Byler (German class)
" "	4. Mrs. Lizzie Erb
" "	5. Mrs. Mary Byler
" "	6. Miss Emma Byler
" "	7. Miss Lizzie Winey
" "	8. Miss Emma King
" "	9. T. M. Erb
" "	10. Ephraim Risser
" "	11. Joe G. Hartzler
" "	12. Herman Massel
" "	13. Henry Heatwole
" "	14. M. B. Weaver
" "	15. Jesse Brenneman
" "	16. B. F. Buckwalter

Primary Department

A.	John Roupp
B.	Miss Etta McFarlane
C.	S. E. Neuhauser
D.	Miss Lizzie Byler
E.	Miss Katie Longenecker
F.	Mrs. Emma Grove
G.	Miss Mary Horst
H.	Mrs. Lizzie White

All of the advanced classes had substitute teachers also except the German class, making a total of thirty-nine teachers on the roll.

With few exceptions it seems there was a rather steady climb in attendance until the peak of two hundred and fifty or more was reached in 1910-12. This was followed by a gradual decline to the lowest level of many years in 1945. Since then there is again an upward climb with an enrollment of one hundred forty-nine at the present time.

Primary Department. With the completion of the basement a primary department was organized in 1909 with D. D. Zook as the first superintendent of six classes. The average attendance was seventy-nine in 1910, fourteen twenty years later, and thirty-five in 1957. With the many new babies in the church family at present there will likely be an increase in the primary department before many years.

There have been seventeen superintendents in the primary department with the late Mrs. J. M. Grove serving at least eleven years. The many, many children who have gone out from under her supervision, do not forget her personal interest and loving kindness. They do not forget her, neither did she forget them. After forty years in the Pennsylvania Sunday School she left this world for her eternal reward. Others who have filled that place for more than one year, are D. D. Zook, Bessie King, Alta Erb, Albert Weaver, Helen Fenton, Ethel Risser, Martha Schrock, Alice Buckwalter, Lorraine Miller, Pearl Rodgers, Naomi Weaver, and Wanda Lee Weaver.

Since the beginning of the Quarter Investment Fund the children have taken an active interest. Their weekly and birthday offerings also go to missions.

Literature—Periodicals. It seems that the first Sunday-school papers used were *Welcome Tidings*, and *Young People's Paper* published at Elkhart, Indiana. *Dewdrops*, published by David C. Cook, Elgin, Illinois,

was another periodical. Then for many years *Rose of Sharon*, *Lily of the Valley*, *Light and Life Evangel*, and *Temperance Evangel* by W. B. Rose, Chicago, supplied the school with good reading. *Beams of Light* and *Words of Cheer* have also entered the homes through the Sunday school, and since the introduction of the *Youth's Christian Companion* that too has been on the list. The Mennonite Sunday school lesson quarterlies have always been used. Torrey's *Gist of the Lesson*, *The Sunday School Times*, *The Sunday School Illustrator*, and *Higley's Commentary* have been additional helps used by teachers. It is interesting to trace the story of the German lesson helps. For a long time, up to 1909, three dozen were used. From then on a gradual decrease to one copy. Finally the last one was ordered in 1918. Beginning with January, 1948, the Sunday school supplied each home with the *Christian Monitor*.

A sample page from a ten-cent notebook used for nineteen years for Sunday-school accounts gives the following for the second quarter of 1911:

210 Advanced Quarterlies	.03¢	6.30
60 Primary "	2½	1.50
25 Teachers "	8	2.00
7 German "	3	.21
30 Sets Picture Cards	2½	.75
1 Picture Roll		.75
20 Words of Cheer	7	1.40
20 Beams of Light	4	.80
		<hr/>
Scottsdale, Pa. Total		13.71
5 kinds of papers .50 each		5.75
W. B. Rose, Chicago		
500 Cards		1.92
David C. Cook, Elgin, Illinois		

One is impressed with the simple economy exercised in those years as reflected in the careful preservation of this little book, and again as seen in the use of hand-written forms on tablet paper for church letters, reports to conference, etc.

The Executive Committee and Ballot. The executive committee of the Sunday school is composed of the ministers, deacon, superintendents, and general secretary. The officers of the school include the superintendents, secretaries (one for the records, one for the literature, and one for mission news), chorister, librarian, nominating committee, and cradle roll superintendent. At the time of the Sunday-school election the church chorister, church correspondent, Y.P.M. superintendent and mission board member are also elected, making a ballot of about a dozen names. The executive committee, with two others elected by the school, compose the nominating committee. The teachers are chosen by the executive committee. A new constitution was adopted April 9, 1957, which will change this procedure.

One interesting and profitable feature of the Sunday school in the early part of the century—the geographical review—has been discontinued. The purpose of this was to trace the geographical setting of the lesson.

To discover and apply spiritual truth proved to be an instructive guide in life's pilgrimage. History and geography, even mountains, valleys, rivers, cities, names, and journeys took on new meaning in the light of such instruction.

From October, 1912, to about 1931 the Sunday-school year conformed to that of the conference year—October to October—but was changed back to January. Since 1948 it again begins in October.

Teachers' meetings and teachers' training classes have been conducted at various times, but never for long periods of time.

The Library. In the fall of 1907 it was decided to have a Sunday-school library and "suggestions for the library were given by the executive committee and adopted by the school December 1, 1907." The executive committee of the Sunday school composed this library committee and was authorized to collect funds, select and purchase books and bookcase. Some good books were donated but the majority were purchased. These numbered about fifty volumes in the beginning; sixty-eight in 1912; one hundred twenty in 1947; and two hundred twenty-five at present. Included in these volumes are books of Christian experience, doctrine, missions, biography and children's books. Harry Buckwalter merits special mention in connection with this library for his earnest effort in promoting it and his wise and careful selection of Scripturally sound books. At first interest was good and many books were read, but with more activity and other interests there is far less demand and this library is not visited so often.

Miss Lena Horst was chosen as first librarian with Paul Erb assistant. That the Spirit directed in the choice of books has never been a question by some who were blest in their reading.

12. Teachers' Meetings

Even before there were regularly appointed Sunday evening meetings there was a small group of laymen who, hungry for the Word and deeper Christian experience, met weekly in what they called a teachers' meeting. This began August 25, 1890, in the home of T. M. Erb, terminating in what was later called the prayer meeting, which continues to the present time. In that number were J. M. R. Weaver, T. M. Erb, Dan, Amos and Abe Hess, John Y. Shelly, Jacob W. Burkhart, Henry Horst, and Noah Eby.

Eternity alone will reveal the far-reaching and beneficent influences of those meetings. From that group and from those meetings came much of the spiritual life and power that was later the heritage of the Pennsylvania Church. Meetings often lasted until near or past the midnight hour. There were no special plans or outlines—just a gathering together of men hungry for truth and ready to be fed. These teachers' meetings, or class meetings, or edification meetings, or Bible meetings, as they were also called, met in the homes, once, and even twice a week from 1890 to possibly 1894, when the regular prayer meeting was established. Living yet today as representative of that group is Noah Eby, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Quotations from the Erb diaries bring his personal witness also: "A large and good meeting." "A good time in the Lord." "Feasted upon the blessings of the Lord." "A glorious teachers' meeting."

13. *Prayer Meetings*

Resulting from, and following the teachers' meeting, was the prayer meeting. For spiritual life and power, for reality in Christian experience and for liberty and joy in the Holy Ghost, the Pennsylvania prayer meeting has been outstanding, and its influence far-reaching.

These meetings were held in the homes each Tuesday evening. Similar to the earlier teachers' meeting, they were an open, informal meeting. The head of the house usually asked one to lead the meeting. After singing a number of hymns, the leader read a lesson. This was followed by open discussion. Seasons of earnest prayer followed, interspersed with song and testimony. Perhaps in no other service of the church was Paul's picture of a typical Christian assembly—"When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation" (I Cor. 14:26)—as well illustrated as in the prayer meeting.

Singing had a large place in the prayer meeting. People brought their songbooks—sometimes three or four different ones. Others taught new songs they had learned elsewhere until there developed at the Pennsylvania Church an unusually large "repertoire" of soul-inspiring music. The singing of that prayer meeting group made one hunger for God's best.

This was true also of testimonies. As saints humbly witnessed to the grace of God, to new light and victory, or failure and defeat, responsive chords were touched in other hearts. Confessions were made, and with the help of the more mature, victories were won. "A heart-searching time" is Brother Erb's comment on one such meeting.

Many received encouragement and a settled experience. The exchange of experience, the exposing of enemy tactics, the overcoming of temptation, and the way to victory made plain, brought an establishment in grace. Conviction came to many, even absent ones, and souls were saved or reclaimed through those cottage prayer meetings. While many were drawn to the meetings, there was also opposition and many stayed away.

It has been the rather unanimous testimony of those who have gone to larger fields of service, or to other denominations, that nowhere have they found prayer meetings like the early Pennsylvania prayer meeting. They remember those "blessed times." There has been a spontaneity, a freedom from formality and monotony that cannot be copied or explained. A fire was kindled that touched many lives and many lands. Not that this group had special favor of the Lord, but there was a yieldedness, a consecration, an acceptance of light that made available His favor and blessing. Caution needs to be exercised in describing any or all of the services at Pennsylvania for, while this was the more or less general pattern, there

were exceptions. There were meetings and programs and seasons when the Spirit's presence was not so evident, when hearts were not convicted or "strangely warmed." Sometimes it was only a very ordinary meeting. Humanly speaking there was room for discouragement, yet always there were those whose faith and endeavor rose above the difficulties.

From Tuesday night the prayer meetings have switched around to Friday, Wednesday, Thursday, and finally back to Wednesday night. Begun as cottage meetings, the prayer meetings continued in the homes for many years. Then followed a long period of alternate seasons of meeting at church and home. With the group getting too large for the homes, and also with the new easily heated building, the meetings have found a rather permanent place at the church.

Through the years many men and women, old and young, have served as leaders of the prayer meeting. There has thus developed leadership ability that is being used in church-wide circles.

Interest and attendance have fluctuated through the years. Five, six, and ten is the number reported for meetings in 1926 and 1927, and the attendance continued small for some years. However, with new families moving into the community, interested in the prayer meeting and attending regularly, the ranks have been considerably replenished, and again the attendance is higher than for many years.

Though the early Pennsylvania prayer meeting would hardly be recognizable in the prayer meeting of today with its different type of program and emphasis—more time given to study and discussion, less time for prayer and praise, less singing and confession—yet there is a spirit of freedom and it still remains "The blessed hour of prayer."

14. *Bible Readings and Young People's Meetings*

It seems that March 5, 1893, marks the beginning of the regular Bible Reading at the church on Sunday evening. While there had been singing and preaching before, yet there was no regular Sunday evening service. For many years it was as the name suggested, a "Bible reading." Just what the original plan or order was is not known, but at least as early as 1896 the leader chosen served for three months. With no outside helps or prepared lessons available, it was his work to prepare his own—sometimes a chapter study, sometimes a character or sometimes a topical study. This one leader had no trouble (!) with long and wearisome committee meetings, and with three months before him, could work out a more detailed and connected study. These lessons were prepared with practical, spiritual benefit in mind, and subjects such as repentance, restitution, faith, prayer, consecration, temptation, tithing, soul-winning brought results.

These three-month periods of leadership gave splendid opportunity for the unfolding of some of the major Bible themes. In one period Harry Buckwalter led in a study of the atonement. Prophetic lessons were studied in three different periods—twice under the leadership of J. M. R. Weaver, in 1910 and 1922, and once (1915) under the instruction of J. B. Smith (who was then teaching at Hesston). It is interesting to note that almost the identical plan and outline of the ages was used by these two men. In the matter of the church age, the rapture and the revelation, the tribulation and the millennium they were agreed and the congregation also accepted that view. This was also Brother T. M. Erb's view as given in his diary at the opening of Hesston Academy and Bible School: "May God ever bless it [the school] to the furtherance of the kingdom on earth and the preparation of many for *His glorious reign of a thousand years*." Though there has been suggestion of erroneous and radical teaching—date setting and the like—yet these men definitely opposed such error.

These Bible Readings were interesting, for usually there was plenty of discussion. People were interested and awake. To them it mattered if right or wrong interpretations were given on the Word of God. Both sides of a subject were given—an all-around discussion. Error was detected and exposed. Commentaries were freely quoted and young people were familiar with Adam Clarke, Matthew Henry, Macintosh, Godbey and others. This frank, pro and con discussion was of inestimable value in broadening views and understanding truth.

A characteristic of all meetings in this period (and more or less since) was to use everyone available. This gave splendid opportunity for development in leadership, speaking, or singing. Many had their start in public work in these services. Special music was and is still welcomed as a means of grace and blessing.

It was decided on June 17, 1906, to appoint a new leader each Sunday night but that arrangement evidently not proving satisfactory, in a short time "Harry Buckwalter was elected unanimously for the next quarter." L. O. King led the second quarter of 1907 and Henry Heatwole a quarter in 1909. Others served that long up to at least 1922. There is no record of when that order was changed to the present arrangement—a committee of three serving for three months, each one leading a month. In 1938 or 1939 it was decided to have a Y.P.M. superintendent in addition to the committee. Albert Weaver was elected and served until 1946 when Glen Hershberger was appointed. O. O. Hershberger was chosen for 1947 and Dr. Fred Brenneman for 1948. Various others have served for one or more years until the present when Wayne Swartzendruber fills that position.

Called a "Bible Reading" from the beginning, it was by 1910 more generally known as the "Young People's Meeting." About this time, or possibly before, the lessons in the *Christian Monitor* were adopted, some leaders, however, selecting their own when deemed more suitable.

There have been times when preaching followed the Y.P.M. but more generally not. There are those who favor a sermon, and others again who feel that one good service may be better than two, and that an evening for Bible study may not be too long.

The years have brought changes to these evening meetings—younger leaders are serving, fewer older ones, fewer topics and less open discussion. Many other types of program have taken the place of the regular meeting, such as music programs, programs by other groups, and guest speakers, so that this meeting has not been given so exclusively to Bible study and evangelism as formerly.

Interesting programs and meetings at the College nearby have sometimes diminished interest and attendance at Pennsylvania. Meetings have often been canceled for revival meetings, mission meetings, music programs, and lectures at Hesston. This closing of church doors—courteous and helpful as it may be—has brought its gains and losses. There is more of a tendency today to keep the doors open and build up interest at home. Students from the College are frequent visitors, as is also true in the morning service.

15. *Missionary Interest*

The first suggestion of missionary interest is under date of July 30, 1892, when Brother Erb says that "some missionaries with about thirty Indians . . . from Halstead were here to visit our Sunday school. It was a rare treat for us, teaching us more than ever the necessity of mission work among the heathen."

Further evidence of active interest was in December 22, 1893, and March 30, 1894, when a group met with R. J. Heatwole to "discuss evangelizing work in the Western Country." This very small beginning led to what was later to become a strong missionary church.

Among the first foreign missionaries to speak at the church were Dr. and Mrs. W. B. Page, of India, who gave a number of talks April 2-4, 1901. So great was the interest that one meeting lasted until 10:30 p.m. On May 22, of the same year Rev. and Mrs. C. G. Cress, of the Brethren in Christ Mission in Africa told most impressively of their work—the first that any had heard a missionary from that land. About that time Mrs. Cress's brother Eber Zook and wife, also Brethren in Christ and representing the work in India, came for a meeting or two.

J. A. Ressler was the next Mennonite missionary to tell about India.

Converted Indians, Armenians, and Chinese have given messages. As early as 1893 a Russian missionary spoke. Other missionaries have come and gone through the years. All these personal contacts, missionary meetings, missionary literature, and missionary emphasis, even before it was emphasized throughout the church, have brought missionary conviction and the call to many. For many years the mission secretary has, from Sunday to Sunday, given current mission news.

Mission Meetings. Beginning July 28, 1907, the Pennsylvania Church sponsored a monthly mission meeting for some years. One of the leading promoters in this work was Harry Buckwalter. Having just completed training at the Christian and Missionary Alliance Bible Training School in Nyack, New York, with a knowledge of the field and interest in his heart, he was well qualified to serve in this capacity. His wide acquaintance with missionaries serving in foreign lands, and letters from them read at the meetings, brought firsthand information and contributed much to interest in missions. All this was new and wonderful for that day!

Foreign immigration, India, South America, Africa, and various other fields and subjects were studied. Fields unknown before were discovered, new contacts made, and new interests developed. Other leaders succeeded Brother Buckwalter and various types of programs were used.

Following is a sample program:

How the Other Half Lives

(Taken from the book bearing that name)

I. Tenement Life—Its Origin and Result

- II. Waifs of the Slums
- III. The City "Tough," "Tramp," and "Pauper"
- IV. The Lodging Houses, Dives and "Barrel" Houses

Various phases of life were studied covering needs from the local community, through the large cities, and on into distant lands. Though simple, the programs met the need of the day.

Monthly mission meetings were discontinued after a few years, and Missionary Day has been observed regularly since introduced by the General Mission Board. One program of November 21, 1920, follows:

Afternoon Session

- I. Summary of India Work
- II. Letters from City Missionaries
- III. What Missionary Motives Should Prevail
- IV. Blessings of Youthful Consecration

Evening Session

- I. Qualities of the Missionary Church
- II. Opportunities Before a Missionary Church
- III. A Bit of Local History
- IV. The Rural Field

General Mission Board Meeting. The one and only church-wide meeting to be held at Pennsylvania was that of the General Mission Board, May 18-20, 1915. Even at that not so far removed period, these meetings did not take on the proportions of the present meetings and it was possible to accommodate everyone in the church house. C. Z. Yoder, president of the Board, and J. S. Shoemaker, secretary, were present. This was one of Brother Shoemaker's last years to serve in that capacity and he showed extreme weariness. Some who took active part were A. H. Leaman, Chicago; S. E. Allgyer, Ohio; T. K. Hershey, Argentina; J. N. Kaufman, India; I. R. Detweiler, India; J. E. Hartzler, Indiana; J. S. Hartzler, Indiana; D. D. Miller, Indiana; Charles L. Shank, India; B. B. King, Indiana; J. I. Byler, Ohio; J. D. Mininger, Kansas City; and Daniel Kauffman, Pennsylvania. One reminder this list of names brings is the changes time has brought. Most of these leaders have gone into eternity; others, in their declining years, have had to exchange activity for inactivity; they who led, look now to others to lead. Few remain in active leadership.

One of the memories of the occasion is the continuous downpour of rain making transportation by wagon necessary in some cases. Adapting himself to this method A. H. Leaman, as he boarded the wagon one day, began singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers"—much to the pleasure and amusement of others struggling in the Kansas mud. A pleasant diversion came in the last session when, with the sun peering through the clouds for a moment, the speaker told the audience to turn around and see the sun shining in Kansas!

A spirit of love and harmony prevailed in this meeting, old and young working together as brethren in Christ. The appeal of missions at home and abroad touched responsive chords in the hearts of many and inspired new consecration to the task ahead.

16. Special Meetings

Thanksgiving Services. Thanksgiving Day has always been observed with a service in the forenoon. Attendance at this service has always been urged. Brother J. M. R. Weaver especially insisted that since it was the one day in the year set aside by the rulers for the worship of God and thanksgiving, there was obligation which should bring response.

Blessings of the past, gratitude for material and spiritual favor and blessing, and sense of obligation, were the usual themes of the Thanksgiving service. Testimonies followed the sermon.

One meeting, November 26, 1914, with a more than usual pre-arranged program included the following:

Devotional	D. S. Brunk
Reading of President's Proclamation	Earl Buckwalter
Reasons for Thanksgiving from Viewpoint:	
Of Church	J. M. R. Weaver
Of Nation	D. H. Bender
Temporal Prosperity	A. L. Hess
Sermon	J. D. Mininger
Offering for Belgium War Sufferers	

Revival Meetings. As noted before, revival meetings had to come gradually. And while few such meetings were held in the early period, there was comparatively a large ingathering, for the majority of young people seem to have been baptized and in the church. Virgin soil yielded more readily to the Gospel seed. When once these meetings were accepted they became quite frequent. A series of meetings by J. M. Shenk brought twenty into the church on January 10, 1892. Later in the year, June 26, twelve more were added following meetings held by J. S. Coffman. With the conversion of the three young men who were later to become pastors of the church—T. M. Erb, J. M. R. Weaver, and D. D. Zook—and the majority of the other young people, the place of revivals was well established.

Noah Metzler, of Indiana, came for meetings a number of times; immediately following a Bible Normal at the West Liberty Church, he with Andrew Shenk, of Oronogo, Missouri, joined in a revival effort at Pennsylvania from January 2-14, 1902. These meetings had been preceded by a week of prayer meetings. Of the last message by Brother Metzler on "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good" the diary says: "A solemnity swept over the congregation and conviction took hold of people. Never saw the like before. . . . We were loathe to see him go . . . but we concluded to keep on the rest of the week." The three home ministers and Jacob Eschlemen (River Brethren) took turns to the conclusion of the meetings. The evangelists left but the revival continued.

The *Gospel Herald* under "Fifty Years Ago" (From the *Herald of Truth*, Feb. 15, 1902) makes this interesting statement: "Bro. Noah

Metzler, Goshen, Indiana . . . filled fourteen appointments (Trousdale, Kans.). Nineteen precious souls were led to . . . a Saviour."

Brother Metzler's next, and possibly last, engagement was in September of 1903. George Lapp followed the next year. In January, 1906, came the largest ingathering of any one time. Under the preaching of J. E. Hartzler some seventy responded to the invitation—husbands and wives, parents and children, young and old came—mostly nonchurch members. While not all paid the price of full surrender, yet there were many who were truly saved. Of this number forty-five were baptized March 4, 1906. Of this occasion Brother Erb says: "Have never seen such before. Had written Brunk and Miller to come and help me out, but they didn't come."

The next year, March 23—April 7, 1907, found, under Andrew Shenk's ministry, a different type of meeting in that only church members—some twenty—responded. Among these were a number of the older sisters who for the first time experienced the joy and assurance of salvation and testified to the same. They are all safe in heaven now enjoying in its fullness the glory of which they had a foretaste in that little meeting in 1907. About a year later A. C. Good, Sterling, Illinois, ministered in a series of meetings which proved strengthening to the church.

Later, March 15—April 3, 1910, Andrew Shenk was back for another meeting. Some heart-searching times were experienced especially in the day meetings. These day meetings of prayer and instruction were quite common in that time and valuable assets to revival effort.

The name of D. G. Lapp cannot be omitted from the list of those who ministered to this church. His numerous engagements in evangelistic effort were fruitful and his co-operation in the instruction meetings most welcome. Under his ministry eighteen were brought into the fold and baptized March 17, 1901. Other dates are not given. His brother George had also served in two series in 1907 and earlier.

Another evangelistic meeting, December 11, 1911—January 3, 1912, conducted by home ministers—Weaver and Zook—assisted by J. D. Minger, and preceded by a week of prayer, was perhaps the last large meeting, that is, large in visible results—with thirty seeking the Lord. In November of that year, under Bishop Noah Mack's (Pennsylvania) ministry there were fifteen confessions. This series seemed to close an epoch in evangelism at the Pennsylvania Church. From the annual (and sometimes semiannual) revival meeting there has been a tendency to fewer meetings and of shorter duration. There has been no large ingathering in any one meeting, though most of the children have come into the church. With few visitors attending there have been no accessions from the outside. The membership increase comes mostly by letter from those moving into the area.

In the forty-five years since the 1912 meetings a great number and variety of men have ministered in the revival effort with varying results. A partial list follows: J. M. Kreider, J. W. Hess, E. J. Berkey, M. E. Bren-

neman, L. S. Yoder, S. J. Miller, Milo Kauffman, J. B. Martin, Nelson Kauffman, E. M. Yost, Allen Erb, Paul Erb, Ivan Lind, Clayton Beyler, Sanford E. King, E. E. Showalter, E. S. Garber, Clarence Ramer, and J. Frederick Erb.

Instruction Meetings. Meetings for the instruction of converts were not neglected. The first account of these conducted by Brothers Weaver and Erb is interesting. Shortly after their ordination they were engaged in a ten-day revival meeting, December 28, 1893, —January 7, 1894, at the schoolhouse in Hesston. During the daytime they instructed converts of a previous meeting at the Pennsylvania Church, in the evening preached at Hesston. Perhaps that has not been repeated since. Instruction classes seemed to be held when most convenient—afternoon or evening, weekday or Sunday, and even Monday forenoon.

This instruction began the first night an individual went forward for prayer and continued, in a class, sometimes for weeks. It was thorough. The Sermon on the Mount was frequently used as a basis for instruction—going beyond the letter of the law to a heart experience. It was not enough to know the catechism and keep the ordinances; not enough to know the theory but to know the experience. Teaching of the Word, followed by personal application, was faithfully done. There was no effort to “pick unripe fruit” but rather one was instructed to go slowly, dig deep and count the cost. Of one such meeting Brother Erb says: “Had prayer with them and gave them instruction in the first steps. Had all to express themselves. Some confessed peace, but others did not.” Converts were not hastily baptized, thus there was time for probation and instruction. Mistakes were made but spiritual discernment often overruled. After this period of instruction “the church doors were thrown open” and “invitation to church membership given.”

These meetings have been the means of helping many into an experience of salvation. Supplemented by the prayer meeting—where converts told of their difficulties, their defeats, their victories; where they gave their first public testimony and offered their first public prayer; where they listened to words of encouragement from older saints—these together were strong factors in establishing young believers in the rudiments of salvation.

Ministerial Meeting. The first and only ministerial meeting at the Pennsylvania Church convened February 2-5, 1912. It brought together ministers from within and without the district. J. S. Hartzler, Goshen, Indiana; D. H. Bender, J. D. Charles, R. M. Weaver, J. B. Smith, D. D. Zook, Levi Miller, Simon Gingerich, and J. M. Brunk appeared on the program. Albrecht Schiffler, Roseland, Nebraska; J. A. Heatwole, La Junta, Colorado, and David Garber also took active part. There was earnest and prolonged discussion. There were differences of understanding on the plan of salvation, differences in the interpretation of God's Word, many Scriptures used on both sides. Yet unity of heart and thought was not accomplished. This was rather the first public dissension which was later to bring disruption to the Pennsylvania Church.

Young Men's Conference. At the Kansas-Nebraska Conference held near Protection, Kansas, in August of 1917, a group of young men met to consider plans for a Young Men's Conference. Receiving the approval of D. G. Lapp, D. H. Bender, Dr. C. D. Esch, Allan Good, and others, they accordingly planned for a meeting to be held at the Pennsylvania Church December 31, 1917—January 1, 1918. As a men's meeting, sponsored and led by laymen, it was unique. M. D. Landis, Earl Buckwalter, Noah Oyer, T. J. Coopridge, Edward Diener, and Dr. George Rostetter led in devotions at these meetings with John B. Kanagy, Chester K. Lehman and Protus Brubaker in charge of the singing. Following is a brief report of the two-day program:

December 31, 1917	
Sermon	J. A. Ressler
Text: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."	
Home and the Young Man	C. D. Esch
Be Thou an Example of the Believers:	
In Word	Silas Horst
In Conversation	Charles Diener
In Charity	Rufus Horst
In Spirit	Chris Graber
In Faith	Ben Horst
In Purity	Edward Yoder
Young Men's Problems:	Open discussion conducted by Noah Oyer
The Dress Question	J. A. Ressler
Evangelistic Sermon	J. R. Shank

January 1, 1918	
Necessity of Church Government	John Thut
Christian Citizenship	J. A. Ressler
The Value of an Ideal	J. D. Charles
Non-Conformity to the World	J. R. Shank
Experiences in the Training Camps	L. O. King
Self-Denial	P. J. Shenk
Consecration Sermon	J. D. Miner
Moderator: Dr. C. D. Esch; Secretary: J. H. Shank	
Resolutions Committee: Paul Erb, Noah Oyer, Earl Buckwalter	

As will be noted this Young Men's Conference was held during World War I, at which time the peace position of the Mennonite Church was under critical observation and being put to severe testing, such as had not been experienced for some generations. The stated object of this Young Men's Conference as it appeared in the printed program is as follows:

We keenly feel the eyes of our nation are upon the Mennonites. Their doctrine is being studied and the question arises, Are they loyal to the teaching of the church. Not only are they being watched but also tried and tested as the refiner does the gold. The question comes, Are we able to stand the test? We need the admonition of the elder brethren. We need to confer with each other. We need to discuss these subjects so vital to young men.

While this was officially known as "The First Annual Meeting of the Young Men's Conference" in the Kansas-Nebraska Mennonite Conference

District, it also proved to be the last; for the war having ended in less than a year it must have seemed that the expressed need for such a conference no longer existed.

This Young Men's Conference, however, soon led to the holding of annual conferences in the district which included women as well as men. During Easter week end, 1920, a Christian Workers' Conference was held at the West Liberty Mennonite Church near McPherson, Kansas, followed by a similar conference at Larned, Kansas, the following year and at Harper, Kansas, in 1922. Further evidence of the influence of the Young Men's Conference held at the Pennsylvania Church and leading to the Christian Workers' and Christian Life conference is found in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 583.



Three Pennsylvania youths: Vernon E. Reiff, later treasurer of Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities; Weaver Hess, later a district superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene; Frank D. King, later executive of Railways Ice Co., Chicago.

17. *Singing Schools and Singing*

Early in the Pennsylvania Church was evident the love of music, which has characterized it ever since. As early as July, 1885, a singing class was organized to meet Sunday evenings. In 1889, Amos Hess conducted a class, and in January, 1892, Wallace N. Kauffman of Missouri came for that purpose. Later in 1892 Amos Hess again taught "singing to learn the round notes." R. J. Heatwole and R. M. Weaver also helped the cause of music by teaching at different times. In the winter of 1898 and 1899 Noah Shenk, a young man from Oronogo, Missouri, taught the Trousdale school and attended the Pennsylvania Church. His services were much appreciated, especially in the music of the church. He was a good chorister and his ability to lead any song even a new one (!)—was unusual for that day. More than helping in all the services he also conducted a singing school at the church—the beginning of a musical career (?) for a number. Those little boys on that front bench singing:

"Eighth notes here they go,
Hear them in our song,
Oh just hear them
How they trot along!"

was quite inferior to their singing today in quartets, choruses, oratorios, or even some in the glory land, but it was a good start.

Mr. Ward of Hutchinson, Mr. Harvey Yoder of Ohio, Mr. P. R. Schroeder of Bethel College, Newton, and Mr. John L. Byler, Newton, were later instructors in singing classes in the church or nearby school-house, but with the coming of Hesston College and its musical opportunities (also more music in grade schools), the old-fashioned singing school is gone. Though the songs were simple and the lessons very elementary, yet precious memories are recalled with "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton" or "Evening Bells" of singing school days.

While there was instruction in the rudiments of music at the singing school there was also instruction in its spiritual quality at the church. Musical technique was not disregarded, but "singing with the Spirit and with the understanding" had the greater emphasis. The teaching that "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36) was just as literally true of singing as of speaking and caused one to weigh carefully the words he sang. It was not easy to sing with uncertainty:

"Now my heart condemns me not,
Pure before the law I stand"

or:

"There's a wonderful peace in my soul"

or:

"I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord."

From a different angle was the silence of three older sisters, who for many years never sang:

“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love.”

They felt no more “prone” to leave the God they loved than “prone” to leave the husbands they loved. It is interesting to know that Brother J. S. Coffman had called attention to the inappropriateness of these very words in the long ago. It has been discovered that in a hymnal at the church one of those sisters has changed the words to read:

“Prone to *love* Thee, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to *serve* the God, I love.”

Apart from the spiritual, understanding type of singing, there was also a spontaneity that made people free to lead or select hymns. The congregation was usually asked to make selections and was free to do so. That custom has brought a pleasant association of songs and singers at the Pennsylvania church. “Grandpa” Erb announcing “Number 96”—“Blessed Be the Fountain of Blood”; Mose Weaver, “Number 211”—“Weeping One of Bethany”; Menno Weaver, “Number 187”—“The Unseen City”; Henry Heatwole, “Number 318”—“The Hallowed Spot”; Mrs. S. B. King, “Number 323”—“Come, Heaven-bound Pilgrims”; and “Grandma” Erb, “Number 79”—“My Jesus, I Love Thee”—linger as pleasant memories. T. M. Erb’s favorite—“Joys Are Flowing Like a River” and J. M. R. Weaver’s frequent use of “Father, I Stretch My Hands to Thee,” just preceding his sermon add to these memories.

Songbooks. *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, a book without notes and published by John F. Funk and Brother, Elkhart, Indiana, in 1872, was the first hymnbook used at the Pennsylvania church. One belonging to J. B. Erb, dated 1877, was in possession of his daughter Mrs. Susie Swim. She said that her father was the first chorister. One impressive song sung often at the prayer meeting is found in this book:

“And must I be to judgment brought,
And answer in that day;
For every vain and idle thought,
And every word I say?

“Yes, every secret of my heart
Shall shortly be made known,
And I receive my just desert
For all that I have done.

“How careful then ought I to live!
With what religious fear,
Who such a strict account must give
For my behavior here!”

This Hymnal was followed by the *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1-4*. Next in order were the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal*, *Sheet Music of Heaven*, and the *Church Hymnal* for morning worship. At Bible Reading (now Y.P.M.) and prayer meeting, *Tears and Triumph*, *Make His Praise Glorious*, *Bible Songs*, *Crowning Day No. 6*, *Best of All*, and *Life Songs No. 1* and *No. 2* have been used.

Choristers. Among those who "led out" in the early years were R. J. Heatwole, Amos Hess, R. M. Weaver, Susie Hess, and Mrs. Belle Neuhauser. Later Amos Geigley, Emma King, Anna Erb, Elmer Hartzler, Joe Miller, Ida White, Mary Longenecker, Paul Erb, Oliver Miller and a host of others too numerous to mention, served as choristers. Still later were Albert and Ralph Buckwalter and their sisters, Alice and Lois, Ethel and Eldon Risser, Howard Hershberger, Ruth Roupp and other young people, followed by D. D. Stoltzfus from Pennsylvania who resided here for a few years. Added to the laymen were also the two ministers—Brothers Buckwalter and Hershberger—who made good leaders. These in turn were succeeded by Marvin Schrock and Dale Martin who rendered efficient service as choristers. As time moves on it ushers in new talent and ability. Those serving presently in this position are Janice Sommerfeld, Mrs. Gene Swartzendruber, Howard and James Hershberger, Keith Miller and Edwin Schrock.

For ability and efficiency some of these later choristers far surpass the earlier ones, and the Pennsylvania church has comparatively good singing. Two musical families—the T. M. Erb and Earl Buckwalter—have contributed much to the ministry of song.

A mixed chorus, organized in the spring of 1956, under the leadership of Marvin Miller is doing commendable work.

18. *The Quarterly Sunday School Conference*

An article by the author appearing in the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, December, 1945, gives the following account of the Quarterly Sunday School Conferences:

The history of the Quarterly Sunday School Conference of the Pennsylvania Church, Hesston, Kansas, has been unique and interesting. As far as is known it was the first in the Mennonite Church. The Sunday school had enjoyed a steady growth from its beginning in 1885 or 1887 but the need for something more to help stabilize, spiritualize and energize it became apparent. The superintendent, Bro. Noah Eby, had a conviction that some sort of Sunday-school meeting would help meet this need, and after prayer and deliberation with other leaders, planned a program for the first meeting, June 24, 1900. Only a few remain who were at the first meeting, but the inspiration of it has never been forgotten. Following is the program:

- I. What Are Absolutely Necessary Qualifications for a Successful Sunday School Teacher?
- II. What Are the Best Methods of Studying the Sunday School Lesson?
- III. Would It Be to the Welfare of Our Sunday School to Make House-to-House Visitations?
- IV. What Is the Duty of the Class to the Teacher?
- V. Proper Use and Abuse of Lesson Helps.
- VI. Would It Be a Benefit to Our Sunday School to Have a Mission Class?

Space forbids a report of these discussions but special emphasis was given to early and thorough lesson preparation, getting the connecting links, use of commentaries, and making the spiritual applications.

That first program would seem quite simple and elementary now, but the spirit, devotion, earnestness and interest of speakers and listeners made it rich in blessing and helpfulness. It was decided to continue these meetings in a quarterly conference. A simple organization followed, with a moderator elected for the next meeting and a program committee chosen. This committee also chooses a secretary and a chorister. A record has been kept of all meetings.

The earlier meetings had from four to seven topics, one to three speakers for each topic, followed by open discussion and then a question box. There were **always** open discussions on the topics and always questions in the query box (but twice). The meetings lasted from two to three hours. Interest was good and no one seemed weary.

July 7, 1929, featured a memorial service for the two long-time ministers of the congregation, Bishop T. M. Erb and J. M. R. Weaver:

- I. Early History of Their Lives.
- II. Transforming Power of Christ in Their Lives.
- III. Blessings Received from Their Ministry.
- IV. Our Increased Responsibility.

Another meeting that was different was in the nature of a Harvest Home meeting, Sunday P.M., Sept. 24, 1944; and still another, a Watch-night service, Dec. 31, 1944, beginning at 9:30, closing after 12:00. But outstanding, no doubt, was the celebration of the one hundredth quarterly meeting, held Dec. 27, 1925 (This program is here inserted).

PROGRAM

of the 100th Quarterly Sunday School Conference
to be held at the
PENNSYLVANIA CHURCH

Sunday, December 27, 1925

CONFERENCE THEME:—Psalm 92:13—"Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God."

- 9:45 Sermon R. M. Weaver
11:00 The regular Sunday School session will be somewhat shortened, and followed by a special review by the Primary Department.
12:00 Noon intermission. People not living close to the church should bring a basket lunch.
2:00 Opening Exercises by the Moderator
Ex-secretary's Report.
A History of the Pennsylvania Congregation T. M. Erb
A History of Our Quarterly Sunday School Conference Dora Roupp
Workers Who Have Gone Out from the Pennsylvania Congregation
Emma Risser
A Roll Call—"Where Are the Nine?" Lena Horst
Selected Music.
4:00 Intermission. Entertainment during this intermission will be provided for those from a distance.
7:00 Opening Exercises.
Memories and Experiences of Early Sunday School Conference Days
—M. M. Zimmerman, M. M. Weaver, Anna King, D. D. Zook, E. H. Byler, Susie Swim, E. W. King, Belle Neuhauser, Joe Byler, Chris Neuhauser, David Reiff, F. G. Roupp, Anna E. King, H. A. Heatwole, Lizzie Erb, E. J. King and others.
Reading of letters from former Superintendents and Members of the Sunday School Earl Buckwalter
Music Our Blessed Sunday School Quartet
The Significance of the Historical Facts of this Program Paul Erb
Moderator, J. M. R. WEAVER
Secretary, S. M. KING
Chorister, R. M. WEAVER

Interesting features of this meeting were: the same moderator as at the first meeting; the same quartet singing the same song, "Our Blessed Sunday School"; and the many who had returned to enjoy and take part in the services.

The meeting of June 12, 1912, merits special mention, for long after it was learned that Vachel Lindsay, the poet, had been present. His identity unknown, he had worked as a harvest hand a mile from the church and was present at that service. Of the service he says, "I have never heard better discourses on the distinctions between the four Gospels. The men who spoke were scholars." The interesting thing about this was the fact that the main speaker—J. M. R. Weaver—had never been to higher schools of learning but was self-educated in the school of Christ.

The programs have varied much in their order and content. They have covered not only all phases of Sunday-school work but of the home, church, and community; of lesson material, lesson preparation, order, reverence, methods, singing, sociability, courtesy, literature, temperance, missions, giving, and Christian experience. Special stress upon the spiritual—personal consecration, fullness of the Spirit, and God's glory—has been emphasized. Special music has had a large place. Quite noticeable is the attention given to children in earlier years, speakers often referring to responsibilities toward them. They were given a part on the program. Talks were given to them, often by some mother. Thus they

were taught in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," and many found Him and went out into active service.

The years have brought changes in the personnel, type of program, and attendance. Fewer attend, the programs are shorter, with fewer subjects (sometimes only one) and not the large scope of material covered. Then practically every one was used—man or woman, young or old. The Sunday school believed in the exercise and development of each pupil and many were asked to serve in some capacity or other. Latent powers were used and freedom of expression given. Open discussion or testimony brought ready response. In contrast, this is seldom called for today and the response is not so prompt. Then, mainly "home-talent" was used; now, outside speakers are often called. A college in the community has given many speakers, given new types of subjects, and higher intellectual standards.

It is exceedingly difficult to condense on paper what a hundred and eighty-six meetings in forty-five years have brought to a church and community. Even the Quarterly reports before us fail to give the spirit and influence of those meetings. Eternity alone can measure the results. Briefly, they are these: exercise and development of talent; better methods of organization; enlarged vision; increased activity; deepened spirituality and influence upon surrounding churches. Besides these, there are intangible results: three mission Sunday schools, for longer or shorter periods of time, and monthly missionary meetings. Teachers' meetings, a Sunday-school library, a mission secretary, a church correspondent, maps and geographical reviews, and a separate primary department have all had their beginning in these quarterly conferences.

Changing conditions have brought declining interest and attendance to this once interesting and necessary institution. Because of this, the conference in the observance of its two-hundredth meeting, April 1, 1951, considered discontinuing these meetings. They continue, however, but, in pattern, more nearly like the regular Young People's Meeting.

19. *Sewing Circle Work*

With a missionary spirit prevailing at the Pennsylvania Church it was but natural to find, in a practical way, an outlet for that interest. At a monthly mission meeting in 1908 Sister Lydia Heatwole suggested that the women meet to sew, first for the poor and busy mothers of the community, then for city missions. Another sister, Mrs. S. B. King, voiced the same conviction, and others did likewise with the result that the Pennsylvania Sewing Circle had its birth right there in that little meeting. Without many preliminaries, Mrs. B. F. Buckwalter was chosen as president and the work began.

The first meeting in the home of one of the busy mothers, Mrs. Fannie Burkhart, was a blessed day in the realization of working for the Lord. The hostess asked for a season of worship and there was Scripture reading and prayer, a custom followed ever since. Anyone conducts this service when so requested by the president, and many seasons of blessing have come to the little group as they prayed together.

With the possible exception of one, this was the first organized sewing circle in the district. Freewill offerings and donations of material have



Pennsylvania Sewing Circle, about 1909.

supported the work. The one aim was to sew and there were some full, busy days with large amounts of sewing finished when evening came. As one of the original members said recently: "We went as early as we could and stayed as long as we could." Each one took her own lunch, and when that was eaten, hands, needles and sewing machines were going again. Keeping to the original aims and purposes, little time has ever been given to other diversions such as reading and programs or in the matter of committees and organizations until more recent years. For many years one officer, with a cutting committee, served. Later only the president and secretary, and at present the officers include the president, vice-president and secretary with various other committees. The work has gone smoothly and well with each one trying to do her best and with *sewing* as the aim. A covered dish dinner now takes the place of the "sack lunch" and more time is given to the devotional and business session.

The beginning years were perhaps the largest in attendance, reaching around thirty in 1909. But a decline came in later years when it almost seemed necessary for the Circle to disband. However, in recent years new recruits have entered the ranks and the work continues. Two of the original members remain. The work has been so varied and distribution so wide that this report can only touch the surface. To homes in the community, to rural fields and cities, to institutions and missions to India; to Belgium, Spain and the Near East through the Friends' Service Committee; and around the world through MCC have gone garments and bedding made by this Circle. The results of one day's work often seemed very small, but the accumulated stores of the years—1908 to 1958—would after all mount in value and size.

With the Scriptural injunction to "honour . . . whom honour is due" it is altogether fitting to give a word of tribute to Mrs. B. F. Buckwalter, the first president, who served faithfully for ten years. Those beginning years were different and difficult. Methods have improved with the years, but it is doubtful whether the spirit of faithfulness, self-denial, and sacrifice have been improved upon. A few lines from her daughter (and these given only by request) illustrate: "There was no vice-president or secretary. She had to do it all herself. Spent a half day in Newton shopping, then another day cutting before the Sewing. Day after the Sewing she finished buttons, buttonholes or any unfinished work. . . . She didn't keep some records because she never wanted others to know just how much she did." It may also be added here that she and Brother Buckwalter packed and shipped many a box, paying freight or postage themselves.

Others too, who were not leaders, served faithfully and deserve honorable mention. The memory is cherished of faithful grandmothers who worked hard from early until late, careful to do good work, trying to finish it, or even taking some along home to finish. They laid good foundations of faithful, conscientious sacrificial service. This spirit continues to prevail throughout the years.

For ten years the Circle met in the homes and the sewing machines

were moved from one place to another. In 1918 the Circle bought its own machines and moved to the church basement where it met for ten or eleven years. After some years in the home of Mrs. Ephraim Risser, the work found a home with Mrs. Gaius Horst for fifteen years, until she moved to Sterling, Illinois, in January of 1946. Again the machines and other materials were taken to the church and have found comfortable and convenient quarters there, especially since the remodeling of the church in 1954.

With the opening of the Clothing Depot for Foreign Relief in Newton under the Mennonite Central Committee in 1944 and the great need for help, the Circle had felt that its greatest need and opportunity was there. Consequently the little group met in Newton or in homes occasionally to assist in the great task of mending. However, that need has been quite generally met and the Circle is meeting regularly again at the church, continuing to find opportunity for a large and varied program—sometimes mending at the Center, sometimes laundering soiled garments, or making up the ready-cut garments in the regular meetings. Thus the scope of service is extended as these garments find their way to foreign lands, and missions and other institutions in the homeland.

In the fifty years of its history eight different presidents have served the Sewing Circle—Mrs. B. F. Buckwalter, Mrs. Emma King Risser, Miss Lena Horst, Mrs. Fred Grove, Mrs. Gaius Horst, Mrs. Clarence Zook, Mrs. Junior Weaver, Mrs. Freedley Schrock and Mrs. Milford Roupp. It has been quite generally the aim of these leaders to direct in profitable conversation, to serve the needy and to glorify God.

A record of this phase of work would not be complete without mention of help given to the orphanage at Hillsboro, Kansas, an interdenominational institution under the leadership of Enos Engle, a Brethren in Christ minister. Long before there was organized sewing circle or mission work in the district—in the 1900's—the Pennsylvania women went there to sew and clean or bring sewing home. Two of those "orphans" still remain nearby. They also sewed for outgoing missionaries in this period including Lydia Ellen Schertz of the Pennsylvania Church, who went to India in 1907. And again they helped the poor of Newton with food, relief, garments and invitations into the homes for special meals—a commendable spirit of spontaneous giving and serving when there were no funds or organization. Naturally the scope and variety of work has widened with the passing years.

20. Social Life

The social life of this church group must not be overlooked for, even with high standards of spirituality, there was room for the social side. No people on earth are more truly sociable than the Christian—a sociability that goes deeper than the veneer of mere social convention. Early in the history of the Pennsylvania Church was this spirit reflected. The large number of visitors from the East was amazing, and the Jacob Erb home seemed to be the “home” for these. Many young men coming West found shelter under that hospitable roof. And there some saw their first family worship and offered their first prayer.

There was a great deal of visiting among each other. Not only on Sunday, but visiting during the week—daytime or evening, or staying all night—was not uncommon.

Besides these times of social visiting, there were also the so-called “socials” or “sociables.” Entertainment seemed to be no problem for visiting and singing supplied that. A group seldom met without singing. Young and old, alike, enjoyed it. Religion and the social life were not divorced, and prayer ended many a visit or social gathering. The spiritual nature of these gatherings is suggested in the quotations from the 1892 diary: “A good social meeting in the presence of the Lord. Praise His Name!” “A social meeting—a grand feast by the Lord!” “Social meeting—a glorious time!”

These early standards prevailed for many years. Not that all were in accord or able to enjoy the spiritual atmosphere, but which so predominated that, after all, those less inclined somewhat imbibed it (outwardly, at least). In the group of young people were two classes—the more earnest and active, the more cold and indifferent—and also those on the outside. A definite line of demarcation preserved Gospel principles, yet commanded respect. The stronger helped and influenced the weak.

Other homes of the community invited the young people in for singings or socials. These gatherings were much enjoyed by friends in other denominations. Even then questionable features were seldom indulged. Entertainment was simple, for just a few songbooks and perhaps an organist were all that was necessary.

It might seem strange to know that box suppers, costumes, blackened faces and plays were discountenanced by some. With the many and varied types of recreation and entertainment today the present generation might wonder how the former group ever had any pleasure under such restraint! Yet many of that number would testify that they enjoyed life immensely. Personal conviction, not restriction, guided them, though some no doubt were overconscientious.

Life in its social, cultural, recreational and educational aspects has so completely changed in the decades since the founding of this com-



Group of young people at the F. W. Horst home on Thanksgiving Day, 1908.



Group of young women, about 1911.

munity, that it would be useless to compare and folly to try to fit one into the other. That there are standards attainable in every age which lift young people above the world, even in its social and recreational phase, is the answer to loyal, conscientious hearts. None can go far wrong when in everything they seek the glory of God.

A good, healthy social life continues to prevail. Young and old mingle freely. Many social affairs bring the group together. A helpful, hospitable, and co-operative spirit predominates. Interest and consideration are shown and there is freedom from petty jealousies and strifes. A "social time" follows most services and strengthens the ties of friendship.

Not related to the social life, but bearing upon the matter of mutual helpfulness, was the organization in February, 1947, of the Hospitalization Plan whose purpose is "To provide a systematic method of mutual sharing of hospital expenses" for "all members of the Pennsylvania Church." This has, however, been disbanded since the general organization of Mennonite Aid, Inc.

21. *Awakening*

Quite early in the history of the church came a spiritual awakening. Preceding chapters have already shown growth in things spiritual and further enlargement upon this phase may seem unnecessary. The problem of overlapping and placing of details presents difficulty. While this "awakening" applies to the early years it also assumed new and larger proportions as the years passed by and is a part of Pennsylvania Church history.

Influences in that direction have already been noted. Evangelistic meetings with good evangelists brought the initial step. The group of young men who met weekly for prayer and Bible study advanced the work another step. Advised by Brother Coffman to "go where you hear the Word of God preached" they went. It was at River Brethren and Free Methodist Camp Meetings in Newton and Mennonite Brethren in Christ Camps nearby that a number, including some of the ministers, received experiences in grace that identified them and the church as a spiritual people.

With her ministers preaching higher standards of Christian experience, and with these, the generally accepted standards, there was laid a foundation for the Pennsylvania Church that was unusual. The soil was virgin, easy to prepare, and produced a good harvest.

Another means of help in bringing about this awakening concerned not only the men who preached but also their type of preaching—the texts they used, the themes they developed, the adaptability of their message to human need. They covered well the field of Christian experience both in its elemental and advanced stages. They knew their Bibles.

The following selections are some of the themes used, "Sin," "Confession," "Self-examination," "Faith," "Justification," "Regeneration," "Adoption," "Christian Perfection," "Sanctification," "Christian Liberty," "Leprosy and Its Cure," "Jacob Wrestling," "A Rest for the People of God," "Refiner's Fire and Fuller's Soap," "Abundant Life," "Second Coming of Christ," "The Ark, a Type of Salvation," and "The Ministry of Suffering and Prayer." These simple subjects were often the background for profound truth.

Another contributing factor in this awakening was association with other believers. As characteristic of pioneer communities, there was little prejudice, they seemed like one brotherhood. Certainly there was co-operation with the Dunkards (Church of the Brethren), Mennonite Brethren in Christ, and River Brethren (Brethren in Christ).

There was mutual concern and co-operation in every soul-saving effort whether in the schoolhouse, church, or tabernacle. "Excellent sermon. Preached on sanctification. Very good. After preaching he gave liberty for each one to speak. Mostly all responded in giving words of

encouragement and praising the Lord. Had a happy time"—these comments from the diary reflect the attitude. Mennonite ministers were asked to assist in revival meetings at the Hesston Methodist Church and on one occasion J. S. Coffman preached there. In 1894 and 1895 Pennsylvania ministers preached biweekly at the General Conference Mennonite Church in Newton. These same ministers later filled Sunday evening appointments at the German Methodist Church in Newton continuing until 1904.

Camp meetings, revival campaigns and Bible conferences were freely attended by both laity and clergy.

Before there were any missions in the district, Pennsylvania Church supplied workers, directors and ministers for the Hillsboro Orphanage, an interdenominational institution, at Hillsboro, Kansas.

This fellowship with believers, desire to serve, and receptivity to light brought spiritual enlargement. The wholesome, beneficent effect is attested in the spiritual progress of the church and its widespread influence for good.

In this connection separation from the world—the sinful world system—was stressed, but not the exclusiveness and aloofness that closes doors to service—that produces a “holier than thou” reputation or impresses with unapproachability. In all this wide fellowship there was faithful loyalty and retention of denominational identity.

Not only were those in the immediate community affected but many from more distant places were touched. With no thought of boasting but in deep humility and to the glory of God, it may be said, as with the Thessalonians, so from the Pennsylvania Church “sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia but . . . is spread abroad” (I Thess. 1:8). Conviction, enlightenment, and blessing came to visitors as they became aware of these standards of truth and experience. There was an irresistible power that made people want something better. The Pennsylvania Church was recognized as a church that stood for godliness and separation. It is also true there were many who did not accept her standards.

With the year 1902 came further awakening. In describing the “great awakening” in the Mennonite Church Harold Bender, in his booklet the “Mennonite Sunday School Centennial” page 54, has this to say:

The farther we get away from our recent Mennonite History, the more keenly we become conscious of the great spiritual awakening which occurred in the Mennonite Church in the generation from 1890 to 1910. This was the time of the great evangelistic harvest in the church. . . . And above all it was the time of a new surge of spiritual power and vitality, when the tide of spiritual life began to run high and strong, and a new type of church member, of minister, and of congregation was being created.

An interesting comparison—while the church in general was feeling a new surge of life and power, so this little congregation in central Kansas was experiencing the same. Earnest, prevailing prayer brought a revival—spontaneous, and searching. Without special preparation it

"broke out" first in a little cottage prayer meeting where the Spirit worked in a mighty way. Heart-searching conviction took hold of the people and they were led to see, not only need, but also provision for that need. As they met conditions and appropriated that provision, they went out a Spirit-filled, impassioned group to witness to the grace of God.

This revival spirit affected all services. It was not unusual to give the invitation at any service. Many found the Lord and many new homes opened for prayer meeting. It was interesting to note from week to week the progress of these new believers.

As in the preparation ministry of John the Baptist when he taught the people to "Bring forth . . . fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:8) so here was emphasized also the same truth. Knowing that "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13), led many to confession and restitution. Wise teaching kept from absurd and unnecessary confession.

Children, as well as older ones, knew there was no pardon for unconfessed sin and were examples as they faced parents, teachers, merchants or the church, in confession and restitution. They knew what a change of heart meant. They knew the meaning of victory. They loved the service of the Lord and were glad to witness for Him.

A number of the young people also were loyal, obedient, faithful. They knew the meaning of consecration and soul-winning was a passion. Their ministry and influence was extended to other fields, as through prayer groups, personal work and testimony they brought blessing to conference sessions and elsewhere. This heaven-born revival affected all phases of the work at Pennsylvania. New impetus and life came to the ministry and laity, to the services and also to the home.

All these experiences of the individual and of the church would most naturally manifest themselves in practical everyday holy living. Shallow emotionalism was condemned and only a faith proved by works accepted. Love for one another was shown in deeds of neighborliness, mutual aid and visiting the sick. The erring were sought and restored, those who opposed and persecuted were forgiven and loved. The fruit of the Spirit was demonstrated in longsuffering, gentleness and goodness towards others, being "kindly affectioned . . . with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10). No sacrifice seemed too great, no service too small. Mere sentimentality and public expression carried no weight unless backed by a consistent, useful life.

However, it is not likely that all this was one hundred per cent true of the Pennsylvania congregation. While that spirit, encouraged by the ministry, predominated, yet never did all understand, or approve, or accept. The enemy was alert, active and even in the more fruitful years kept members from loyal, consistent living, and outsiders from entering the fold. It seems the only answer could be that it was not too easy to "join church" without being truly born again, and that for some the price was too great.

22. *Loss and Gain*

"But the enemy feels our vitality. He is plotting for our destruction." He is not alarmed at nominal, inactive, self-sufficient Christianity, but much concerned with those who would truly and wholly follow the Lord. Then he uses every conceivable means to frustrate the work of God. If he cannot intimidate as a "roaring lion," then he comes as "an angel of light"; if he cannot keep from full surrender, then he leads to extremes beyond; if he cannot lead into formality, he leads into fanaticism.

And so this glorious year of 1902 (and more so 1903) came to a tragic close. Some of the most earnest and sincere were misguided and led into fanaticism. Just how to explain is difficult, and, remembering the sincerity which prompted some unwise actions increases the difficulty. There were some who believed that eating of pork was forbidden. Others were strong on divine healing and refused all medical help, some even thinking it wrong to wear glasses since the Lord was their healer. And still others, not distinguishing between the wearing of gold for utility of symbolic purposes and that for ornamentation, exchanged gold glass frames for silver, and preferred silver dental filling to gold.

These things, not sinful in themselves, subjected these people to delusion. Eager to do God's will, failure in judgment led them to extremes in the matter of guidance. They were led to look to impressions as their guide and, not realizing that these may come from below as well as from above, were led to do unwise things. They did not transgress or backslide but failed to discriminate. To be in "bondage" to a church seemed wrong. "Come out from among them" meant to "come out" from the church; so some felt the time had come to sever connections with the Mennonite Church.

Basically they retained their views on the plan of salvation. Doctrinally they and the three ministers were as fully agreed as when they first met together in that little prayer-teacher's meeting. However, the ministry gave no sanction to some of the unofficial steps taken and opposed vigorously the erroneous and fanatical views.

Before this first withdrawal a meeting of the bishops in the district—Brothers Schiffler, Miller and Brunk, with Brother Erb—was called to meet at the church, June 24, 1903, for the purpose of adjusting matters. According to the diary "a line was drawn and all those that abide by it can remain." The diary further adds: "Some few refused." But there were some who seemingly did not understand the questions and were surprised to find themselves without a church home. Following this action ten or more families worshiped elsewhere. Some went into mission work. Some few returned to the Mennonite Church. Others have become loyal members of other denominations. They show love and appreciation for

their mother church and freedom from prejudice. A number, whose lives have proved a blessing to many, have gone to glory.

The Pennsylvania Church suffered from this experience. The loss of fellowship with those loved and lost was keen. The cause of Christ suffered.

But in spite of all this, there was again growth and advancement. With the ministers left to continue proclamation of the Gospel truth, the work was held together. These men did not lower former standards but emphasized more than ever the need for coping with error. As they continued their emphasis on a holy life, believers were encouraged and the church strengthened.

Within the next decade and more, an unusually large number of families moved into the neighborhood—Buckwalter, Longenecker, Miller, Grove, Unzicker, Wilhelm, Hartzler, Winey—some of these families were large, accompanied by married children, with still more children to marry in the church. With these new families, attendance soon reached its highest peak with extra chairs in aisles necessary for regular services. Some of these families became active workers and furnished deacons, preachers, teachers and missionaries. Besides increased attendance, this period also brought Mission Meetings, Sewing Circle, and various other activities.

23. *Holiness and Division*

The Pennsylvania congregation for many years emphasized a deeper spiritual experience. It was taught there by such early evangelists as J. S. Coffman, J. L. Winey, Noah Metzler, J. M. Shenk, and Andrew Shenk. It was taught by all the home ministers. In searching for and entering into the will of God for holy living there was for years mutual understanding and harmonious working together.

The doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism was sanctioned by the Kansas-Nebraska Conference. In 1899 this question was discussed: "Is the baptism of the Holy Ghost necessary to acceptable Christian living, and is it the duty of every one to seek it until it is definitely experienced?" Answer: "According to Matt. 3:11; Acts 2:4 and Acts 2:28, 39, the baptism with the Holy Ghost is as necessary to be obtained as conversion and that it becomes the duty of every believer to seek and tarry until they have it definitely experienced (I Cor. 12:13)." This resolution was passed the following year: "Should the bishop when he receives converts into church by water baptism offer a special prayer for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost according to Acts 8:15; 19:6, Heb. 6:2?" Answer: "Whereas we have scriptural evidence that the apostle offered special prayers on certain occasions, be it therefore—Resolved, That we recommend such prayers to be offered when applicants have not yet received the Holy Ghost."

The diary records Brother Erb's convictions on the subject and the prevalence of the teaching: "Joe Byler preached a very good sermon on sanctification" (1890). "J. S. Coffman . . . on sanctification" (1892). "Noah Metzler preached a Holy Ghost sermon . . . Blessed be His name forevermore" (1900). "J. M. Shenk preached a very good holiness sermon." Next day: ". . . preached again on holiness. A glorious time!" (1895). "I preached on holiness." "Thus ended a time of refreshing shower, the like I never saw in my life. Everybody seemed to be caught with fire from above. Praise and glory be to His name!" "A glorious hour it was—prayer and testimony for an hour. Many witnesses responded. Some came forward for more grace."

It seems clear that in those early days holiness was not merely a hobby; there was good balance. A well-rounded program of teaching and service brought an establishment in grace and victorious living to many in the congregation. Briefly stated they believed that holiness is:

Negatively—

- Not absolute, edenic or angelic perfection.
- Not impossibility to sin.
- Not exemption from temptation and mistake.
- Not emotionalism.

Positively—

It is a heart made free from sin, perfected in love and filled with the Holy Ghost.

“It is the expulsive power of a new affection (that) will purge from the heart all that is contrary to the pure love of God.”

However the excesses of 1902 and 1903 began to raise questions in the minds of some, and lines of division began to be drawn. Also this teaching of holiness, new to many, variously understood, and counted as erroneous by some, brought opposition. More and more there developed locally and generally unfavorable agitation against it. There were misgivings. To one side it seemed like the enemy's final determined thrust to divert from the will of God, to lead to compromise and defeat; to the other side it seemed like spurious doctrine which needed extermination.

Two ministerial meetings were called in 1911 and 1912 by leaders in the conference district for the purpose of correcting this teaching and unifying the leadership, but each side seemed convinced of its own position.

A further attempt to settle the matter was made by the Kansas-Nebraska Conference convening at the West Liberty Church, McPherson, Kansas, in October, 1912. A resolution passed there which seemed like a minor issue to some, became major to others. It was not this resolution alone but discussions relating to it and inferences growing out of this particular session of conference that became deciding factors in the issues at stake. This resolution from “Conference Record of the Kansas-Nebraska Mennonite Conference” page 173 is as follows: “Resolved, That we believe that the Bible teaches that without holiness no one can be a child of God (Heb. 12:14; II Tim. 1:9; I Cor. 12:13), and that each believer should so order his life as to meet the conditions for fuller growth in holiness (II Cor. 7:1; II Pet. 3:18; II Cor. 3:18) and that we should trust the Lord for a constant keeping and look forward to a completeness in holiness at His coming. (I Thess. 5:22-24 and 3:13.)”

It seemed, to some, the climax had come, there was but one alternative. But not until after weeks of agonizing prayer, sleepless nights, discussion with ministers and bishops, much correspondence, and not until he was fully and definitely convinced that this was the only right thing for him to do, did D. D. Zook on December 29, 1912, announce to the Pennsylvania congregation his withdrawal. With the failure of J. M. R. Weaver and others to effect reconciliation with church leaders he (Weaver) also withdrew.

A large number who wanted to continue under their ministry felt that, for this privilege, they too must withdraw. Thus two ministers, a number of Sunday-school teachers, a dozen or more families (about fifty members) withdrew and later organized the East Emmett congregation.

This division was a severe blow to the Pennsylvania Church, far worse than that of 1903. It was also a blow to the Mennonite witness and holiness teaching in the community. A few of those who left returned

later. The years have brought their healing balm and adjustment. Regularly the two groups co-operated in funerals and the use of the cemetery. There is now a congenial relationship between the two churches, and recently there has come exchange of pulpit and program—acceptable and pleasing to all.

As we look back on the division of 1912, we can see that this rift came largely through misunderstanding and misinterpretation, through lack of wisdom and patience. It had nothing to do with forms of dress or forms of worship, with the use of English or German, the right or wrong of Sunday school, or lesson helps, or special music, with topless buggies or automobiles. It did not arise from petty strife and jealousy, from insubordination and desire for leadership. It did not come from dissatisfaction with Mennonite principles.

It arose rather from differences concerning the theology of Christian experience. Both sides believed in experiential salvation. Both believed in holy living. But on the explanation of what both believed in they could not agree. To each group the theology of the other seemed unscriptural and unsatisfactory. Had there been less insistence on verbal agreement, more agreement on the essence of the life in Christ and the power of the Spirit, and a little more patience to wait for understanding, the division might have been avoided which caused so much suffering and which dealt such a blow to the health of the congregation.

Both sides in the controversy sang with appreciation such a hymn as No. 365 in the *Church Hymnal* which defines holiness as taught at Pennsylvania:

Oh, for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free!
A heart that's sprinkled with the blood
So freely shed for me.

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My dear Redeemer's throne;
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone.

A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of Thine.

An humble, lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true, and clean,
Which neither life nor death can part
From Him that dwells within.

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart,
Come quickly from above,
Write Thy new name upon my heart,
Thy new, best name of Love.

We trust that in heaven, with all the past under the blood, and with hearts purified and perfected in love, we shall sing together in praise to our holy Lord.

24. *East Emmett*

Perhaps a further word concerning the group that left the Pennsylvania Church in 1913 is in order. Involved and related as they are, coming from the same Mennonite stock, burying in the same cemetery, known in holiness ranks as Mennonites, and still such in heart, makes it right to include them. Brother Zook's decision to leave the church was a matter only between himself and the Lord. He meant to quietly withdraw and find another church home. There was no thought of starting another sect. But with the large number taking the same step a place of worship became necessary. Mennonite Brethren in Christ, Brethren in Christ, Nazarenes and others invited them to join their ranks, but they did not feel clear to do this. They did believe in and desired to promulgate Mennonite principles and the simple life. So after prayerful consideration it was decided to organize a little church and build a house of worship. Its location on the banks of East Emmett has given rise to that name.

Tragic as church divisions often are yet God has overruled and made East Emmett a worthy contribution to the local community and to the world. Her ministry of intercession, missionary zeal and opportunities provided have made an impress. Missionaries from around the world have filled the pulpit and evangelists of no little repute have conducted their meetings. Culture, scholarship and spirituality have met there. Visitors from all over the state and adjoining states have been attracted to the annual camp meeting and many have found pardon and cleansing at its altar.

There is a congenial relationship between the two churches and mutual sorrow in the passing of each other's members. Their ranks too are thinning. Some have seen fit to unite with other denominations, some are in foreign lands, some are filling pulpits elsewhere. A number have moved away and still others have gone to eternity. In various Bible schools and colleges their young people have found life companions with whom they have gone to other fields.

On February 13, 1948, the community was saddened, though not surprised to hear that D. D. Zook had succumbed to the last of many heart attacks. Just five days previously he had celebrated his eighty-fifth birthday. In spite of all that could be said for or against the stand he had taken or views he held, no one could doubt his sincerity or gainsay his holy consistent life. Excerpts from his writings in 1913 show his attitude: "I can truthfully say there is no one in all the world that I do not love I do not feel that I have been misused or abused in any way by any one. I believe of course I have been much misunderstood and possibly misrepresented quite often. But I hope not intentionally. In summing it all up and considering my poor old blundering, stammering way of

trying to serve my God and preach His Word, I just think I should be the last one to be hurt or to complain. Really I think God has been dealing very graciously with me and I can say: 'My lines have fallen in pleasant places.' I would be ashamed to say one word of complaint. . . . If ever there was a time in my life that I was under the smiles and approval of God it is now. . . . I believe and endeavor to preach and live the same good old doctrine that God taught me some twenty years ago. . ." (and these lines were written in the fires of deepest suffering and trial). Later writings confirm the same conviction: "At this writing (1940) it has been twenty-eight years since we have taken that step [leaving the church]. If placed under the same circumstances, I would not know what else to do. . . . I am sure the Lord did the best with us all He could. No ill will towards anyone. We peaceably agreed to disagree. No doubt my actions have grieved many of my friends. I beg their pardon, patience and forbearance. We will understand it all by and by."

What he suffered in these experiences is known only to himself and God. But his "leaving all" brought gains and compensations far beyond his thinking. He still retained many friends in the Mennonite Church but added to these are multitudes across the country and around the world who knew and loved him. He found many "brethren," he had many spiritual children.

25. The Interval and Present Status

Reorganization and readjustment became necessary after this break had come to the church. New leaders and teachers were chosen, and Sunday-school classes rearranged. After some years (in 1922) J. M. R. Weaver felt that he should return to the church and, once again he and T. M. Erb served together in the Pennsylvania pulpit. In the meantime Brother Chris Reiff had returned from Oklahoma and assisted for some years. Following his ordination, Paul Erb was added to the ministerial body. In the interim of T. M. Erb's illness and absence of others, J. M. Brunk, living then in the community, was called to assist from April 6, 1913, until around 1918, when he moved out of the community. In the years 1920 and 1921, a rotating schedule brought frequent visitors to the pulpit.

After the deaths of J. M. R. Weaver and T. M. Erb in 1929, Paul Erb and Earl Buckwalter pastored the congregation together until the former moved to Indiana in 1941 to become Professor of English at Goshen College. In the fall of that year O. O. Hershberger, from Canada, with his family moved into the community and placed their membership with the Pennsylvania congregation. His faithfulness, kindly concern, and courtesy to all were much appreciated. It is to be regretted that a slight stroke has incapacitated him for active service at the present thus leaving the pulpit to Bro. Buckwalter. However, Dr. Fred Brenneman and Gideon G. Yoder gave frequent assistance until duties called them elsewhere.

Now after some seventy years of history, the Pennsylvania Church finds in the pulpit Earl Buckwalter alone as pastor, who has served longer than any other—twenty-eight years. Coming with his parents from the state of Pennsylvania in boyhood he has spent most of his life in the Pennsylvania Church community. As a skilled mechanic he has earned the support of his family through the years, this being supplemented in a small measure in recent years by offerings from the church. Earnest endeavor to serve his church, his integrity, and his interest in the community win for him the respect of many. His ministry is appreciated. He is often called upon to officiate at funerals where his sympathetic understanding and feeling are manifest. He serves not only the local community but in church-wide circles.

Changes that have naturally come in the intervening years may not be recognized by this generation, but are more apparent to those who lived before. Changed conditions have brought changes in type of program and service. Less singing and prayer, less spontaneity and open discussion and shorter programs characterize the service. But better singing and better training also are in evidence. Young people are far in advance of their predecessors in that respect. Many opportunities

present themselves; easy transportation makes possible wide fields of service. They are being used in Gospel teams, jail meetings, street meetings, mission Sunday schools, hospitals, old people's homes, and in farther removed places than was possible in the pioneer days.

Again in the matter of attendance, changes have come. From crowded churches requiring additional chairs in the aisles for the regular Sunday morning service, the attendance and membership gradually reached its lower levels since the beginning years. Many classes were disbanded, cradle roll department discontinued and few leaders, teachers and chorists were available.

Other factors contributing to the earlier decreased attendance are also observed. With the organization of the nearby College church three Pennsylvania families transferred their membership there. Later other families did likewise. Contacts of the Pennsylvania young people with the students of the college naturally led to marriage and many, with their companions, moved away. Thus from many and various causes had the ranks been depleted.

The economic factor also enters in. In this new and undeveloped country with plenty of cheap land, it was possible for fathers to start out their sons on the farm. Other farms could be rented. It was comparatively easy to find a home in the community. But with further development and mechanized farming that became more of a problem. Training in the crafts and professions took some to the city. Thus a community largely Mennonite at one time is quite generally taken over by others now. Only a few of the pioneers remain. Within a four-mile radius of the church are some fifty once Mennonite homes where Mennonites no longer reside. About a half-dozen pioneer Mennonite homes are now occupied by members of the church. So the losses in homes surrounding the Mennonite church have far exceeded the gains. Many of the members now live in Hesston and some reside in Newton. But again the trend is upward and the present membership at one hundred twelve and with the Sunday school enrollment at one hundred and forty-nine, there has been an increase in all services. Young married couples have added the largest group of children since early days. Offerings are taken every Sunday. The spirit of liberality is commendable. Conspicuous is the punctual and regular attendance in the Sunday morning services.

And finally in retracing again the history as illustrated in Chapter I by the two streams flowing from the continental divide, so to many the Pennsylvania Church has been the "savour of death unto death;" and "the savour of life unto life" (II Cor. 2:16). With a knowledge of Satan's effort to overthrow the church, but also with a knowledge of what the Lord has done, and what He is able to do, the Pennsylvania Church stands today as a monument to the grace and mercy of God. Her knowledge of truth and experience bring stupendous responsibility and obligation. With humble gratitude to God for all that He has done, for all that He is doing, for His mercy and faithfulness, and with further gratitude that

the records in heaven are accurate and true as no one on earth could write them, this closes the present record of the Pennsylvania Mennonite Church—in whose memory many would join in singing:

“There is a spot to me more dear
Than native vale or mountain;
A spot for which affection’s tear
Springs grateful from its fountain.
’Tis not where kindred souls abound,
Though that is almost heaven,
But where I first my Saviour found,
And felt my sins forgiven.

“O sacred hour! O hallowed spot!
Where love divine first found me;
Wherever falls my distant lot
My heart shall linger round thee.”

26. *"Cloud of Witnesses"*

In support of the helpful, enduring, and far-reaching influences of the Pennsylvania Church "a cloud of witnesses"—pioneers of their children—bear testimony in the following:

Windom, Kansas

August 20, 1957

Prayer meetings! They were called teachers' meetings in those days. Don't remember we had any that were called prayer meeting, but they were just that. They discussed the Scriptures, then prayers and singing. No one watched to see if was nine o'clock, time to close the meeting. I was just a little girl. I'm so glad the folks didn't think we were too little to get any good out of the meeting. Somehow I got lasting impressions that have meant much to me all through these years. I praise God for the Harvey County teachers' meetings. One thing I've never forgotten—D. D. Zook didn't say he didn't have enough education to teach a S.S. class (before he was a preacher even), for he had the Holy Spirit in his heart and I'm sure did much for that class of young men. Even if he or the class couldn't pronounce all the words and proper names, he'd say, "just call it Jerusalem," and go on with the lesson.

As I remember our social gatherings we spent the time in singing. Didn't have to have eats or games inside or outside to have a good time. . . .

Mrs. Susie (Heatwole) Yoder

Miami, Florida

April 18, 1945

. . . The teachers' meetings which many times ended in a prayer meeting which were started by John Weaver, Dave Zook, my brother Tillman (Erb), Noah Eby and others, brought tremendous conviction to my heart and others also. Rev. J. S. Coffman was a fine evangelist and brought many searching and convincing messages, also Bishop John Shenk and his brother Rev. Andrew Shenk. Then Noah Metzler was a great blessing.

I was truly born again on January 10th, 1892, and later the Lord sanctified wholly and the Holy Spirit comforts today. I shall never forget the teachings they gave us as young converts from the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew which has been a great help and blessing down through the years.

Some of those who were baptized the same time my sister Susie and I were Reuben Weaver, Annie (Weaver) Miller, Eli Burkhardt, Susie Reiff, Lavina (Burkhardt) Weaver, Lizzie Burkhardt, Ed Yoder, Susie (Hess) Weaver. I think Henry Heatwole but not quite sure. There were twenty-

one in all, Bishop John Shenk officiating. I am sorry I cannot think of the rest now. Perhaps Mrs. John Rodgers and Mrs. Bert Rodgers. . . . My husband Jonas Eby, Menno Weaver and Bert Rodgers came in a few years later when Rev. Noah Metzler was the evangelist.

We got a very good start in our Christian experience and prayers for us at the Pa. church. My very fine home training and father's and mother's prayers are not forgotten. . . . God has marvelously blest us down through the years and His grace has been, and still is sufficient. . . .

Mary (Erb) Eby

Goshen, Indiana

August 25, 1945

You have a great task before you, however it will be interesting to all those who have been connected with the old church, also for future generations. Any church history has always been interesting to me.

I remember the teachers' meetings we had. (We would call them prayer meeting now.) Bro. T. M. Erb and Bro. J. M. R. Weaver and their wives were such faithful workers and such good teachers. D. D. Zook was another one, and Bro. and Sister John Shelly. . . . All these and many older brethren who were in the ministry, their testimony in life and teaching all through these early years, was something I hope I never will forget. I thank God for these pillars in the church. . . . It was in the year 1893 that Bro. D. D. Miller of Middlebury, Ind., held meetings at that church. I did enjoy his preaching. I still remember one of his texts, John 2:10 last clause: "Thou has kept the good wine until now." To me it was a wonderful sermon.

Mrs. Fannie Burkhart

Newton, Kansas

April 2, 1945

I have always been so thankful to God for good Christian parents—Jacob B. and Leah Erb—who taught me to love and serve God, for they were very diligent in the bringing up of their family in the church of their choice. The Pa. Church has many happy memories for me where I was taught the Word of God which led me to find my personal Saviour early in life.

In a revival meeting held by Rev. John M. Shenk I was truly converted, and joined the church. I tried to live a conscientious Christian life as far as I had light. I taught Sunday-school classes for many years, and always felt that I must be an example, and live so near my Lord that I could point others to the Lamb of God. In the early spring and summer of 1902 there came a spiritual awakening in the Pa. church and many felt the need of a deeper work of grace in our hearts. We heard that the blood of Jesus could cleanse the heart from inbred sin

and make it a fit place for the Holy Spirit to come and make His abode and have the supreme control of our lives. Amos Horst, my first husband, and I made a full consecration and surrender to the work of the Lord. We heard and obeyed the call of the Master when He said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel." We sailed for India Aug. 10, 1905. We had our last farewell services in the Pa. church. We shall never forget all our friends and loved ones who said they would stand by and pray for us. They did not fail, for we were happy and satisfied in our work there. But after a few short years God saw best to take my companion to his reward from India, Jan. 18, 1908. I found God's grace sufficient in the shadows as well as in the sunshine. His way is best and His keeping power never failed me down through the years.

Susie (Erb) Swim

Fall River, Kansas

April 5, 1945

When I was saved I think it was the spring of about 1893. Bro. John Shenk was the evangelist, and there was a large group saved at that time.

When I was about nine Sister Lora King (Ohio) was my Sunday-school teacher. She was Oliver King's sister. . . . Of the girls in that class there was Elsie Byler, Lottie Weaver (J. M. R.'s daughter), Anna Hess, Susanna Heatwole, Lena Horst and myself. . . .

Just what the church has meant to me would be hard to say; it always seemed more like home to me, until these later years when those of my childhood have passed on. But the teachings I received there mean much to me, and as I grow older the Christian life means more to me than it ever did before.

Mrs. Dora (Hess) Roupp

Harper, Kansas

April 4, 1945

I gave my heart to God and united with the church in 1891 when I was seventeen years old. Bro John Shenk from Elida, Ohio, held meetings then and a large class was received into the church (about 20 converts). Bro. John Shenk baptized us. . . . Such brethren as Daniel Lapp, Bro. Metzler, from Ind., G. R. Brunk, Menno Steiner, J. S. Coffman and many others held special meetings that stirred our souls to walk closer to the Lord. The Pa. congregation was blessed with such ministers as D. D. Zook, T. M. Erb and J. M. R. Weaver that were men of God and gave us spiritual food for our souls, and stirred up a missionary spirit. I can look back with a great deal of satisfaction to the blessed times we had together and praise the Lord for the influence it had on my life. I yielded myself to the Lord and in the fall of 1907 I was ordained to preach the

Gospel and was sent to Harper. I remember the last meeting we sang, "Blest Be the Tie that Binds," and how that touched my heart. . . . I give T. M. Erb a great deal of credit for the spiritual welfare of the Pa. church. I can see now better than at that time the part he played as the bishop of the church.

R. M. Weaver
(now deceased)

Loveland, Colorado
May 8, 1945

If I remember correctly it was in 1900 when quite a group made the start in the Christian life. The revival was in December and Bro. Dan Lapp was the evangelist.

I am happy to give my testimony for Jesus. He saved me and I have had no desire to turn back to the world. Though it was about two and a half years later when I found a deeper experience of grace in my heart. I praise Him for keeping and leading me through these years.

Mrs. Ada Horst Reiff

Newton, Kansas
March 14, 1946

Your letter started me thinking of some things that I've been wishing for forty years or more I could forget. But for your sake and your earnest desire to give a true history of things that took place in the making up of the History of the Pennsylvania Mennonite Church and of course you want to know the good as well as the bad. . . . Yes, I can truly say God made those early prayer meetings a great help and blessing to me for a long time. As long as we kept humble and teachable I know they were a great help and blessing to all of us who did attend and it was a delight to look forward to the time to meet in some home for these meetings. The way they began . . . Bros. Amos and Abram Hess and Johnny Weaver and Jacob Burkhart and John Shelly made an agreement or covenant together that they would tell each other of their faults and confess their wrongdoings to each other. . . . Then sometime after I was converted they invited me to come. Of course we went. We would confess our faults one to the other and pray. Others would come and God dealt with us. I now remember one instance that took place at the home of John Shelly. Do not remember just what I said but anyway it wasn't very charitable . . . something that one of the preachers said in opposition to our way of thinking and Mrs. Shelly said, "Davy, we must make some allowance; that's the best he knows, no doubt. Let us hope he will soon learn better." Always been glad for that rebuke. . . . Then one other time

when the meeting was down here at Dan Koppes' and Mrs. Davy Weaver and Mrs. Jacob Erb were there and I was so earnestly telling of all that God was able and willing to save us from . . . Mrs. Erb and Mrs. Weaver talked together and said, "My, we ought to tell Davy. Why he is sinning right now." I was so accustomed when telling something I was dead sure about to say, "You bet," and was using it without thinking. The next Sunday Caleb Winey came over from Peabody and preached . . . about using idle words and mentioned that "you bet." . . . It shot through me like an arrow. I said to myself, "Why, my God, I am using that word most every day!" So the very next prayer meeting I . . . confessed and asked pardon. Then Mrs. Weaver said, "I told Mother Erb we ought to tell you . . . but she said, 'I hate to say anything.'" But God had a way of letting me know.

When strangers would come to those meetings they would get under conviction and were blest and helped. I do remember in looking back over these 50 or 60 years that even I can see very clearly many places where God was *trying to help us*. I am comforted to know that the many mistakes we made, bad as they were, were not intentional. So I trust they are covered by the blood. What a different history of the Pennsylvania Church could have been written if we would have been more thoughtful and prayerful. . . . Zeal we had but not always according to knowledge available. That God gave us a holiness revival there is no denial, and I for one will never cease to thank God for what He has taught me and did for me regardless of all my blunders and mistakes. I would not know what else to do than what I did if I had it to do today. . . .

D. D. Zook

(now deceased)

Strong City, Kansas

April 5, 1945

In youth we look trustfully and optimistically to the future. When we reach the age of fifty or fifty-five, we begin to look back more frequently. These retrospective glimpses help us to re-evaluate life and life's past experiences.

I remember well my contacts with the Pennsylvania Mennonite congregation near Zimmerdale from about the age of eleven to twenty-one. Those memories stir my mind with strangely mixed emotions of regret and gratitude. Gratitude for the high Christian privileges presented; regrets because my warped and temperamental inclinations kept me from making proper use of them.

I recall with ever-increasing appreciation the reverent attitude and the sincere devotional spirit of the congregation at worship. I also treasure greatly the definite emphasis on fundamental truths. I mention only some of them. The emphasis upon the love as well as the sovereignty

of God; the Christhood of Jesus; the guiding, comforting power of the Holy Spirit; the Gospel of Jesus as the hope of the world and faith and repentance as the essential prerequisites of salvation. These doctrines still stand out as beacon lights along life's pathway. May God ever add His blessings as you carry on for His kingdom.

V. A. Nickel
(now deceased)

La Junta, Colorado
May 16, 1946

"I remember at Pa. church the regular weekly prayer meeting. When I was converted the very first week I began to go to prayer meeting. Had there been no prayer meeting custom I could not have had this blessing. I recall how that a faithful few kept it going. If those few could now know that it helped one poor lost soul to get to the light it may encourage them. It was there I uttered my first public prayer and gave my first testimony for Christ. I heard the testimonies of those who found the Lord. It created in me a knowledge of a life which I also could secure.

Allen H. Erb

South Gate, California
March 4, 1946

I esteem it a privilege to express my appreciation for the blessings which have been mine because of my association with the saints of the Pennsylvania Church. I shall never forget those services and especially the prayer meetings, which meant so much to me as a young Christian. It was there in the old church where I found my Saviour and I many times have thanked God for the spiritual atmosphere which surrounded me during the early days of my Christian experience.

While life's journeys have led many of us to different fields of labor the influence of those early days has meant a great deal to me, and I am glad to say I love the Lord with all my heart and am striving to do my best to do His will and win souls for Him.

John Hess

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

O, do not wrong the generations past
By scorn or bitter prating of dead hands!
It is not chance that their achievements last,
Nor whim of fortune that their building stands.
It was for us they strove; we are the heirs
Of all their agony and sweat and tears;
And, willing or ungrateful, each one shares
In the vast legacy of toilsome years.
They would not bind us; theirs no selfish aim
To chain the future to their halting pace.
They mourn our failures, glory in our fame,
Thrill with our struggle in this mortal race.
A cloud of witnesses, O doubtful soul,
Applauds your straining footsteps toward the goal.
—George Meason Whicher, in *New York Times*
Feb. 4, 1948

27. *Early Church Documents*

DOCUMENT FROM THE EARLY ORGANIZATIONAL PERIOD

This Article of Agreement by and between the Old Mennonite Church, of the county of Harvey, and the state of Kansas, the party of the first part: and the Amish Mennonite Church, of the county of Harvey and state of Kansas, the party of the second part,

Witnesseth:—

That the party of the first part in consideration of the use of one hundred dollars to be deposited as hereinafter agreed, agrees to rent and does hereby lease to the second party, the church, located on the north west corner of the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ section 25, Town 22 and Range 1 west, every fourth Sabbath, and at other times also when not in use by the first party the said first party holding possession and reserving for use by itself thru successive Sabbaths in every four and all other week days when needed, except each fourth Sabbath.

That the party of the second part agrees—First—to pay into the treasury of the first party one hundred dollars to remain and be used by the first party unto the termination of this lease. Second—to use said church only for religious and funeral services, and with reasonable care. Third—to repair all damages done while in use by said second party. and Fourth—to furnish one half of the fuel and lights, necessary for use of both parties.

It is further agreed by both parties—that this lease may be terminated at any time by the first party, but only at the end of one year or the end of any number of years after the date of this lease by the second party: that for either party to terminate it, thirty days notice must be given to the other party: that upon the termination of this agreement by either party as agreed above, the party of the first part shall immediately refund to the party of the second part the one hundred dollars deposited with said first party.

Dater this the first day of April A. D. 1887.

	David Weaver
First Party	Jacob B. Erb
Signed	David J. Zook
Second Party	David M. Schertz
Witnesses:	Daniel Hess
	Jacob A. White
	Jacob Z. Burkhardt
	Solomon Martin
	Francis W. Horst
	E. M. Shellenberger

DOCUMENT FROM THE EARLY ORGANIZATIONAL PERIOD

The brethren met at the Pennsylvania House on Tuesday afternoon, Dec. 11th, 1888, on financial and other secular business. Nearly all were present.

The following resolutions were adopted:

1st Resolved, That two treasury (or collection) boxes be made and put up in the church house with lock on each and a small hole at the top to insert money by any one so disposed, which is to be used for any expenses pertaining to the church, or church house.

2nd Resolved, That if not enough money will be put in these boxes to pay expenses, special collections should be held (by the brethren only) until enough will be here to pay them.

3rd Resolved, that Pre. David Weaver be our Committee-man to the Semi-Annual Conference.

4th Resolved, That after Jan. 1st we pay our janitor S. H. Martin the sum of .15cts for every time he makes the fire and sweeps the room for Divine worship, Singing school excepted.

5th The question was asked, if the singing school shall continue as heretofore? Was therefore resolved, That we discuss that at some future church time after services.

6th Resolved, That Bro. Jacob Erb see to making the treasury boxes.

7th Resolved, That Bro. Jacob Erb get solid shutters for the church house as soon as there is money enough in the treasury after all debts are paid.

8th Resolved, That the church yard be plowed early next Spring.

9th Resolved, That hedge and yellow locust trees be planted in the yard after plowing next Spring; they to be planted in rows two rows together six feet apart each way. The space in between the rows to be wide enough to drive through and hitch to both sides with back of buggies towards each other.

On motion the meeting adjourned.

LEASE

We, the undersigned, Trustees of the Mennonite Congregation of Emma Township, Harvey County, Kansas, known as the Pennsylvania Church, have this _____ day of _____ Leased unto _____ and unto _____ heirs, a lot of ground numbered _____, in the graveyard of said congregation, for the sum of _____ Dollars, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, they to have the sole use and occupation of the same, for the purpose of burying members of their family, for the term of ninety-nine years, subject to the rules and regulations of the aforesaid Church.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Trustees shall be the Managers.

No lease or possession of a lot shall be given before the purchase money is paid. And no lot shall be reserved for a longer time than thirty days, if the same is not paid for.

The holder of this lease shall have the right and privilege to put up suitable tombstones, and may put in corner stones if desired.

A lot may be transferred by the holder thereof, with the consent of the managers but only for the burial of persons as specified.

If a lot, or a portion of the same, is vacated by the holder thereof by moving to other parts, or otherwise, the church shall take possession of the same, by paying the holder its relative value.

If any monument, effigy, inscription or structure whatever erected on such lots is considered by the above-named church offensive or improper it shall have the right to demand and cause the removal of the same.

It is particularly understood, that any one purchasing a lease for a lot in the burying ground of the Mennonite Church, does hereby agree that he will not have any Secret or Fraternal Organization to conduct the funeral, with its usual ceremonies, either in the church or at the grave. This does not infer that a member of any such organization may not be buried in the graveyard.

Such flowers that do not grow wild, and destroy the grass, may be planted; also roses if kept well trimmed.

The whole shall be one common plain graveyard, with its necessary walks and divisions, enclosed with a good fence made and kept in repair by the said congregation. If any flowers or shrubbery growing on any lot shall by means of their roots, branches or otherwise become injurious to adjacent lots, the managers or trustees shall have the right to remove the objectionable parts.

The raising or filling up of blocks or graves shall be done subject to the instructions of the superintendent.

The said church reserves the right of adding to, altering or amending the foregoing rules.

Superintendent

Trustees





